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PCGG to appeal US court ruling on $40-M Marcos loot

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government will contest the latest ruling of a US district court ordering the release of $40 million belonging to the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos to thousands of victims of human rights abuses during martial law.

FULL STORY A11

Arab TV says De la Cruz taken to execution site

THOUSANDS with execution by fate hung captive, Filipino truck driver Angelo de la Cruz asked that his body be sent home to the Philippines for burial should he be killed, the leader of Jaysh Ansar Sunna network said yesterday.

It seemed to translate, seeing him in an Arabic video tape at 4 o'clock in the morning yesterday dressed in an orange garment and lay in the same room by two other hostages beheaded before him.

The gunmen had set a 48-hour deadline for the Philippine government to agree to their demand for the Filipino humanitarian force in Iraq to be withdrawn by July 20. The deadline—the third given by the group—was to expire at 3 a.m. today Manila time, the Associated Press said.

Late yesterday, the date of the 46-year-old father of eight from Barangay Buenavista in Mexico, Pampanga, remained unknown.

De la Cruz was among the growing list of ordinary people from around the world who had become pawns in the hotly conflict between the United States and its allies, on the one hand, and Islamic militants opposed to the American military presence in Iraq, on the other.

FULL STORY A11

PRESIDENT Arroyo: Hit-nak, an ordinary, even as the nation mourns it the dark

GMA keeps 'em guessing

PROTESTS for the withdrawal of the Filipino contingent in Iraq to save Angelo de la Cruz are directed with water by police who disperse the rallies at Plaza Miranda. Women protesters, Carol Pagaduan-Araullo (center), Bayan vice chair, suffered a head wound. DAI CRUZ

Government vague on pullout, and when

By Jerome Aning, Juliet Labog-Javellana and Alexis Pega

IN THE darkest hours of Angelo de la Cruz's life, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday kept the nation in the dark, too, on whether or not she would really pull out the Filipino troops in Iraq—as demanded by Iraqi militants—and when.

In classic example of ambiguity, the government told the Iraqi gunmen who were threatening to behead the 46-year-old Filipino driver unless the 51 Filipino troops in Iraq were withdrawn that the Philippines would remove the humanitarian force "as soon as possible."

Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis issued the statement on the Arab television station Al-Jazeera in a direct appeal by the government to Ok in Cruz's capture.

"In response to your request, the Philippines ... will withdraw its humanitarian forces as soon as possible," Seguis said, according to the translation of the statement addressed to the kidnappers. He gave no date for withdrawal.

"I hope the statement that I read will reach the heart of that group," said Seguis. "We know that there is the subject of peace and mercy."

It was not clear from the state-

FULL STORY A11

Erap judge promoted to high court

By Armand N. Nocum

TWO URDJA allies ousted President Joseph Estrada scored twin victories in the criminal cases he is facing before the Sandiganbayan, the antigraft court's Presiding Justice Minita Chico-Nazario is taking her oath as the 15th justice of the Supreme Court today.

Nazario's ascension to a coveted slot (P 2,915 in today in Malacañang, according to Estrada's counsel chief and spokesperson of the special division specially created to hear the Estrada cases. Nazario chairs the special division.

Some said he was told about the oath-taking schedule by

Pimentel: Drilon-Villar deal bad luck

By Julie Lalong Javellana and TJ Burgonio

BUSINESS Sen. Sonny Catriptano?

It's "bad luck," Sen. Aquilino Pimentel quipped even as Malacañang announced yesterday gave its seal of approval to the semi-shortleg agree-

FULL STORY A10

Yellow ribbons sprout in Metro for Angelo

By Leila B. Salaverria and Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

THEIR red pens in several areas in Manila have sprouted yellow and white ribbons—a symbol of hope for the liberation and homecoming of Angelo de la Cruz.

Two militant groups, the League of Filipino Students (LFS) and Gabriela, conducted separate activities yesterday reminiscent of the operation preceding for

FULL STORY A11

last Sen. Benigno Aquino's return in 1983.

For good measure, both groups reiterated pleas for the government to withdraw its troops from Iraq, in compliance with the demand of De la Cruz's hostage-takers, a Muslim extremist group.

The LFS led the tying of yellow ribbons in front of the University of Sto. Tomas along España Boulevard and in Plaza Miranda in Quiapo. On the ribbons were written "Pull out Filipino troops."

"We chose the color white because it symbolizes peace [based on justice," said Emma de Jesus, Gabriela secretary general. "The tying of ribbons goes beyond the arms of Angelo. The Philippines is being dragged into an unjust war when we should be focusing on livelihood for our countrymen."

She said Gabriela hoped the ribbon-tying would catch on elsewhere in the country, especially

FULL STORY A11

Little Flower 'seen' shedding tears of blood

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Workers Learn Bureau

BACOOD CITY—White Catholic devotees prayed for divine intervention to save the life of truck driver Angelo de la Cruz, a 20-year-old man reported seeing blood drip from the statue of St. Therese of the Child Jesus at the Bagsic Cathedral here on Monday.

Christopher Pengo, a choir member of another Bagsic church, said he was passing in front of the image of St. Therese when he noticed blood trickling down its cheek.

Pengo claimed that he had

FULL STORY A11

THE BLEEDING image of St. Therese of the Child Jesus at the Bagsic Cathedral has been drawing Catholic devotees as well as the deeply curious to behold the so-called miracle for themselves.

Rest house arrest hit; Palace cheers

By Armand Nocum and TJ Burgonio

A DAY after the Sandiganbayan granted his request to be placed under house arrest, ousted President Joseph Estrada yesterday lost no time in moving from his detention cell to an Army base in Tanay, Rizal, to the latter's consternation.

Various militant groups condemned the Sandiganbayan decision as a sell-out, a political compromise between President Macapagal-Arroyo and Estrada, and a prelude to Estrada's acquittal on plunder and perjury charges.

But Estrada's family, Malacañang and administration lawmakers praised the transfer of the deposed leader, who was jailed for allegedly looting millions from provincial coffers as well as receiving "jueteng" kickbacks.

Armed with the court ruling, the 67-year-old Estrada moved yesterday morning to the 11-hectare JE Youth Camp, just a stone's throw away from the detention cell in Camp Capinpin.

The court had given Estrada three days to occupy his seven-unit, two-bedroom bungalow in his private home, which includes a shared and a swimming pool.

"Of course, he is happy

FULL STORY A10

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WEATHER FORECAST
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 2004
Second FRONTPAGE

GMA in no mood to party

THE LIFE of the party is nowhere to be found in yesterday's thanksgiving victory party for President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang.

By John Ludwig Jaculbia

THE PARTY was over before it could even begin.

Despite a diplomat's announcement that the Filipino troops were going to be pulled out of Iraq "as soon as possible" to save hostage Angelo de la Cruz's life, Malacañang was in no mood to party yesterday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo cancelled the thanksgiving party she was throwing at noon for her staff to celebrate her election victory.

A second batch for 2,000 guests had already been laid out on the Palace grounds when party organizers began dismantling the white tents and tables that had been delicately set with white glasses, china and linen napkins.

The tents had been set up as early as Monday for the party that was planned weeks ago.

Office of the President employees were already seated at some tables or were lining up before several buffet tables when the workers began taking the tents down and hauling away the tables and chairs. The buffet table was moved to a far corner of the Palace grounds and the employees just took the food and brought this back to their offices.

Palace officials admitted the party would have been in bad taste because of the hostage crisis which was gripping the nation.

The Presidential Security Group had already "swept" the grounds for the President's arrival at noon but she was a no-show. PSG and palace officials were strategically stationed on the grounds to prevent the media from getting into the luncheon venue which had been declared off limits to coverage.

"The party has been cancelled," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said. "Because of this (hostage) crisis, we have to focus all our efforts on saving the life of our worker."

Abroad admitted the party would not have been "good under the circumstances."

3 Pinays back from S. Korea with tales of sexual abuse

By Dianne Dumanlis
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Three Filipino women left for South Korea hoping to find their Prince Charming and live happily ever after.

Weeks later, two came home victims of sexual violence.

One was physically abused by her husband in the first, battered and pregnant. Another was raped on her honeymoon night.

Not wanting to suffer further humiliation, they refused to file any complaint.

According to Fey Mirasolles of the Commission of Filipino Overseas (CFO), only four cases of human trafficking, along with other slavery and prostitution, had been filed since Republic Act 9208 or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act was enacted in June 2003.

The law aims to eliminate human trafficking, especially women and children, and establishes necessary institutional mechanisms to prevent and suppress trafficked persons. It also provides penalties for violators.

According to the primer on RA 9208, the most prevalent form of trafficking is by mail marriages. Filipino women marry foreigners for a chance to go abroad and find work there.

Of the 244,808 Filipino women working abroad, 97,462 are in the United States, 74,429 in Japan, 20,421 in Australia and 13,434 in Taiwan.

Mirasolles said government agencies would be intimated through various modes. Beyond introductions sponsored by IMBAL mail-order brides were responsible for 64,168 international marriages.

SC remands Lucio Tan tax case to Marikina court

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE SUPREME Court yesterday revived the P26-billion tax evasion case against tobacco baron Lucio Tan even though the Bureau of Internal Revenue in 1998 had decided not to pursue it.

In a unanimous decision, the SC reversed the rulings of the Court of Appeals and the Marikina Regional Trial Court, which had both affirmed the March 1999 decision of the Marikina Metropolitan Trial Court dismissing the tax evasion case against Tan and several officials of Fortune Tobacco Corp.

The Supreme Court also ordered the Marikina MTC to continue hearing the case.

"After a thorough review of the MTC order dismissing the criminal case...the court finds that said order [was] null and void and [was] a result of a gravely injudicious exercise of judicial authority" said the 34-page ruling penned by Associate Justice Adolfo S. Azcuna.

"By merely refusing the first sign of the BIR, the MTC abdicated its duty as a court of law and relinquished itself to the administrative agency. In failing to make an independent finding on the merits of the case and merely endorsing the dismissal on the position of the BIR, the trial court relinquished the discretion it was obliged to exercise," the SC said.

Cris Montano, Mount Cook, spokesperson for Tan and his group of companies, refused to comment, saying it would be difficult to do so "at this time." He said he had yet to receive and read the Supreme Court decision.

Thomas Aquino, including Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., voted in favor of reviving the case while Associate Justice Renato Cayetano took no part in the deliberations since he was the prosecutor of the case filed.

Aside from Tan and Fortune Tobacco officers, the other accused were officials of nine companies formed by Tan allegedly used to avoid paying taxes.

Nartea BIR Commissioner Liwayway Vinzons-Chato initiated the case in September 1998 to the Department of Justice after Fortune Tobacco allegedly failed to pay its ad valorem, income and value-added taxes for 1996, 1997 and 1998.

Because of the years of legal maneuverings, the DOJ decided that there was probable cause and filed the case in the Marikina MTC on Dec. 3, 1999.

But MTC Judge Alex Ilan dismissed the case on March 10, 1999, after BIR legal and prosecution division chief Gina Balderosa and assistant chief for prosecution Romeo P. Buan told the court that the BIR had reviewed Fortune Tobacco's records and had found that it had not committed tax fraud.

The findings were approved by then BIR Commissioner Bernardo Bunda.

The SC, however, said Judge Ilan should not have ruled on the case based only on the BIR's position.

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE COUNCILORS LEAGUE

Our warmest congratulations to:

HER EXCELLENCY GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

and

HONORABLE VICE-PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO

In behalf of the 16,500-strong members of the Philippine Councilors League, we wish to extend our most sincerest congratulations to Her Excellency and Honorable Vice President for having been elected by the Filipino people as the 14th President and 13th Vice President of the Republic.

We join your call for national reconciliation and unity as we move forward in addressing the crucial issues and concerns faced by our nation.

We assure you of our unqualified support and cooperation towards your Administration and pledge that we shall be pro-active partners in achieving your programs and goals that are geared towards building a Strong Republic.

Mabuhay po kayo Mahal na Presidente Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo at Bise Presidente Noli "Kabayan" De Castro!
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AIDS pandemic to favor RP labor

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BANGKOK—In the event of an HIV/AIDS pandemic, the Philippines, with its low incidence of HIV/AIDS, stands to gain from a possible labor shortage.

During the 15th International AIDS Conference held here, the International Labor Organization presented a report which said that almost five million of Asia's labor force, excluding the Philippines, have HIV.

According to the United Nations, there are only 9,000 Filipinos with HIV.

The ILO report, covering the countries of Cambodia, China, India, Myanmar and Thailand, projected that five million workers would be taken out from the labor force as a result of a possible HIV pandemic next year, and another five million would be debilitated by 2010.

In the absence of access to treatment, the total figure would be 18 million workers, the report added.

Worldwide, 36.5 million people of working age carry HIV. Some 48 million workers would be dead by 2010, and 74 million by 2015, the ILO said.

In Cambodia, between 1992 and 2002, the annual gross domestic product growth rate decreased at an average of 0.4 percent each year because of the effects of HIV/AIDS.

In Thailand, the annual GDP growth rate declined by 0.1 percent or $424 million per year, also attributed to HIV.

HIV/AIDS affects 0.8 percent of workers in India and 0.1 percent in China, but because of these countries' huge populations, the actual figures are staggering.

"HIV/AIDS is not only a human crisis, it is a threat to sustainable global, social and economic development," said ILO Director General Juan Somavia.

According to Dr. Nafis Sadik, UN special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Asia, the Philippines is vulnerable to an HIV epidemic because of the low use and unavailability of condoms and the increasing rate of sexual activity among Filipino adolescents.

The Human Rights Watch's HIV/AIDS program added that the Philippine government had banned the use of national funds for condom supplies and did not provide complete HIV/AIDS information to sex workers and others with high-risk behaviors.

Cost still top obstacle vs AIDS

By Pennie Azarcon-de la Cruz

BANGKOK—Stigma may be the main concern of HIV positive Filipinos, but prohibitive costs of anti-retroviral (ARV) medication remains their biggest obstacle to getting treatment for the dreaded disease.

"Access For All" is the theme of the 15th international AIDS conference, ongoing here until the 12th, with pharmaceutical companies being put on the defensive for pricing anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs out of reach of most people living with AIDS (PLWA).

The UNAIDS reported that five to six million victims in low- and middle-income countries needed HIV treatment, but only seven percent or 400,000 had access by the end of 2003.

In the Philippines, HIV positive patients would shell out P23,000 a month for AIDS medication, said Dr. Annie Ditangco, head of the AIDS study group at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), which has 200 Filipino patients under its care. This would be a negotiated reduced price for a cocktail of drugs: P17,000 for the AZT-3TC or Combivir two-in-one pill, and P5,600 for Effavirenz or Stocrin).

With no government funds allocated for the purchase of drugs, Filipino victims had to cough up the amount themselves, a double bind because most of them did not have access to regular income.

Erap judge promoted to high court

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Nazario's staff. He also told reporters that staff members had been flocking to Nazario's office since the news was announced.

Appointed 5 months ago

Nazario is finally assuming the post to which she was appointed five months ago amid much controversy as it followed soon after a handpicked selection allowing the jailed Estrada to travel abroad for knee surgery.

There followed a period of much confusion as President Macapagal-Arroyo appeared to have withdrawn the appointment, only to explain later that she was debating if to allow Nazario to finish her job at the anti-graft court.

Malacañang officials denied that the Nazario appointment to the Supreme Court was a reward for her December 2003 ruling allowing Estrada to travel home after he was convicted by the anti-graft court. Similarly, no explanation has been tendered for why Nazario's appointment took effect only on Aug. 30, 2004, a day after the mandatory retirement age of Justice Vicente Mendoza.

The time, the timing of Nazario's oath-taking promises to generate even more controversy as public outrage over the special division resolution on Monday allowing Estrada to travel home arrived in his lavish Tanay vacation estate has yet to die down.

The house arrest resolution was made on the same day that the Nazario court ruled to dismiss the charges of illegal use of an alias against Estrada.

The court said that Estrada could not be prosecuted for using the "Jose Velarde" alias to opening a trust account with the Equitable-PCI Bank in 2000 as the practice was not illegal at the time.

Estrada still faces the more serious charges of perjury and plunder. He is alleged to have funneled P3.3 billion in illegal gains wealth into the same fake Velarde trust account.

Nazario, who is replacing Justice Jose Bellosillo who retired on Nov. 13, 2003, was appointed by Ms. Arroyo to the post on Feb. 11, 2004, barely leaving the 90-day deadline for appointing Bellosillo's replacement.

Deferred

But on March 4, 2004, news reports came out indicating that Ms Arroyo was withdrawing Nazario's appointment because some lawyers within the President's official family were against it.

Ms Arroyo later told the business that Nazario's appointment was being deferred so she could attend to some unfinished business at the Sandiganbayan.

Soon said Nazario would be replaced by Teodoro Bondoral, the chair of the second division, who is the most senior member of the anti-graft court. Bondoral will be serving as presiding justice in an acting capacity until the President appoints a new presiding justice.

Soon explained that Nazario's Feb. 11 appointment stays even if it was withheld for five months as her records had not been transmitted to the office of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

He said that what was important, was that the Judicial and Bar Council—the body that screens applicants for the Judiciary—has decided to meet the 90-day deadline and submit its list of nominees to the President.

Nazario, 64, a Ms Arroyo's eighth appointee to the high tribunal. She is the first Sandiganbayan presiding justice to be elevated to the Supreme Court.

SC Justice Vitug retires today

Even as Nazario secures her post, the Supreme Court will have another vacancy with the retirement of Associate Justice Jose Vitug today.

Vitug, who chairs the Supreme Court third division and the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal, will be retiring as he has reached the mandatory retirement age of 70, the high court said in a press statement.

He will join the Philippine Judicial Academy next month, it added.

The high tribunal will be holding a send-off for Vitug this afternoon at its session hall in Manila.

Ms Arroyo has 90 days to appoint Vitug's replacement.

Blue data

A native of Dumaguete, Nazario is married to Rodolfo Nazario, the manager of boxing champion Manny Pacquiao.

Nazario finished law at the University of the Philippines in 1962. She started working at the judiciary in May 1972 when she transferred from the prosecution department to the high court's judicial reports and statistics division.

She joined the Sandiganbayan in 1981 as clerk of court of its first division. She served as an RTC judge in Laguna from 1987 to 1995. She was admitted to the New York State Bar in 1988.

In a hearing on the Estrada case on Monday, Estrada's lawyers and members of the Office of the Special Prosecutor also discussed in open court the possibility of Nazario being replaced before the Aug. 16 schedule for the presentation of evidence by the defense.

Lawyers on both sides said the Supreme Court needed to appoint Nazario's replacement or the special division to prevent any delay in the hearing of the Estrada case.

The anti-graft court gave the Estrada defense lawyers 40 Aug. 16 till noon to present their witnesses, as the cases of plunder and perjury could be considered submitted for resolution.

Expert in civil law

Nazario was an associate before President Fidel V. Ramos appointed him to the Supreme Court on June 28, 1993. He is a former dean of the Ateneo Law School and is a recognized expert in the fields of civil law, commercial law and taxation.

He authored two recent Supreme Court landmark decisions, including the resolution dismissing the disqualification petition against opposition presidential candidate Bernardo Pardo Jr.

In his "evidentiary decision" last week, Vitug wrote the Supreme Court ruling that said the Court of Appeals should first screen death penalty cases before these are elevated to the high tribunal.

Vitug also chaired the 1997 and 2003 bar examinations and headed the high court's committee on legal education and bar matters which includes the Philippine Judicial Academy that court approved last month.

Vitug obtained his Bachelor of Laws degree, cum laude, from the Manuel L. Quezon University in 1956.

Maternal degrees

He passed the bar the same year and went on to take two maternal degrees in law (1962) and in national security administration (1975).

Before his appointment to the Supreme Court, Vitug was a professor of law, a tax reviewer and the author of law books.

From 1967 to 1983, he worked in the Supreme Court as technical assistant to then Associate Justice Jose B.L. Reyes. With a report from Philip C. Tubeza

A SHOOT! Ride to succession's walk-taking as senator for former President Joseph Estrada and wife Senator Loi Estrada leaves the Estrada estate. INQUIRER/ARIEL DAYAO

Rest house arrest hit; Palace cheers

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ilmat: we would be much happier if President Erap is transferred in our house at Polk Street in North Greenhills from our rest house in Tanay, Rizal. If that is granted, we would be with him every day," Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, who attends personally to Estrada with his father but is not on bail, said in a radio interview.

The young Estrada said his father was "close to getting acquitted" of the remaining charges of plunder and perjury after the Sandiganbayan on Monday also ruled that the former President could not be convicted for using the "Jose Velarde" alias for bank accounts in which he allegedly hid his ill-gotten wealth.

The anti-graft court said its task ended with its dismissal in Jose Velarde in Feb. 4, 2002 when the prosecution was not yet illegal. The Anti-Money Laundering Law was declared illegal for its retroactive application to opening bank accounts, took effect in October 2001.

Mixed reactions

Malacañang also cheered the court's decision allowing Estrada to travel to his Tanay rest house.

"We welcome the decision of the court — it is consistent with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's policy of humanitarian consideration under the law for the former President," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said in a statement.

In a joint statement, pro-administration Representative Prospero Nograles (Davao City), Pangasinan Bishop Jr. Enrique del Rosario and Sen. Jamby Madrigal said that the two Sandiganbayan rulings showed the court indicative nature of the Arroyo administration and the independence of the courts in administering justice."

Bending the law

But the seven justices watching Hernando Pineda said the Sandiganbayan had bent the law to accommodate Estrada's "special" request. Ms Arroyo and Estrada. The court said it would allow Estrada to stay in his rest house as long as he didn't take part in any domestic matters pending against the government.

"The land of the country" is teeming not to be nothing but a sellout, ANAK Party-list appears disliked with the court's blessings," Pandacaqui Rep. Conrado Estrella said.

According to Estrella, the court's explain why Estrada had quieted down and refused to support protests since the electoral fraud that purportedly robbed actor Fernando Poe Jr. of victory in the last presidential election.

In a statement, Estrella said the Sandiganbayan not only rewrote criminal law but also dictated there was "one law for those with 'political clout' like a former President and there is another one for the rest of us."

What he wants, he gets

"What Erap wants, Erap gets," Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said, noting that the former President's motion to transfer to his rest house had been never denied by the Sandiganbayan.

In a telephone interview, Villa-Ignacio noted that the court had been granting almost all of Estrada's requests, including birthday furloughs, visits to his mother, and even a medical trip to the United States that the court however did not take.

"The motion is really unique," he said, adding that the Sandiganbayan could not fault the public for suspecting that there had been a deal between Estrada and the Palace.

"But absent any other evidence, I would still give the Sandiganbayan the benefit of the doubt. We just hope there is no outside interference," he said.

Love disorder

Senior Associate Justice Edilberto Sandoval, who dissented in the resolution signed by four other members of the special Sandiganbayan panel, also found it odd that the court should seek Estrada's conformity regarding the use of his rest house.

"The situation has become, as it should not, that the offended party (the Estrada family) is totally dependent on the whim and caprice of Estrada. It should not be subject to the dictates of Estrada's whim or desire with attached conditions," Sandoval wrote in a seven-page dissent.

He echoed the prosecution's view that the Sandiganbayan in its own "house" arrest in this game." He found the decision "unprecedented" and "without legal basis."

"We civil court in this jurisdiction has ever placed anyone on house arrest," he said.

Long overdue

But Estrada, speaking through his lawyer Jose Flaminiano, said the Sandiganbayan decision was "long overdue."

Estrada was transferred to his rest house after he accepted the seven conditions imposed by the court, including placing the entire property under the supervision and control of the police. He is also not allowed to give interviews to the media unless the court allows it and will not be allowed to indulge in any political activities. His visitors will be allowed in at the discretion of police and court officials. And all kinds of interviews are prohibited.

"Even if I don't agree with all the conditions, I cannot do anything. I'm at their mercy," Estrada said.

He denied running any deal with the Palace, saying he remained a friend of some of the policies of the Arroyo administration.

Estrada has been in detention since April 2001, shortly after a military-backed popular revolt cut short his presidency in January of the same year.

"The climate is unique. He is a former president whose continuing political clout this court takes notice of," the court said in its ruling. With reports by *GMA. Cabacungan Jr., Carlito Delfin, and Ricoche Rivera*

Little Flower 'seen' . . .

Front page A1

hour praying the rosary in front of the image for the past week because he had been devoting most for Virgin Mary.

Other witnesses

At least 20 other churchgoers have reported witnessing what they called a miracle. Many of them included Fr. Rolando Dela Cruz of Holy Rosary Church.

Warren Sapid, a lay apostolic worker, said she saw the blood on the cheek of the St. Therese statue fall on the small crucifix held close to the image's chest.

The nun entered the Carmel of Lisieux in France at 15 years of age. At 24, as she lay dying of tuberculosis, Therese penned her credo to her heart while looking up saying, "I love Him. My God, I love you."

Left text for blood

"I was serving tables (Fr. Nicanor Castro, the parish priest) ordered me to pencil the image as people wanted to wipe away the blood. The first set of blood straight to a handkerchief but soon cost me the labor servers for wearing," Sapid told fellow laywomen, who were milling around the convent room.

People started to flock to the cathedral after Sapid relayed his "discovery" to a television station.

Fr. Castro said the phenomenon's message was to "enlighten the world's leaders because the world is on the brink of destruction."

Separate advocates from different ecumenical groups have been looking for such a sign for months, to promote President Macapagal-Arroyo here quelling the Coalition of the Willing that backed the United States' invasion of Iraq a priest said.

To dramatize crusade

But Fr. Andrew Cesidio, vicar of the Iloilo-Bongao Catholic Vicariate, said the Church was careful about confirming miracles, and a decree barring all angles to validate Sapid' claims.

Cesidio said people could have sprinkled human blood on the statue to dramatize the revived crusade against the Iraqi occupation.

"The blood could be authentic but a human could also have introduced it to the statue. There could be other scientific explanations for the liquid. It would take years for the church to make that conclusion, and in the meantime, people would simply be entertained by curiosity," he said.

The St. Therese statue had been on display for decades, along with the rest of the cathedral's religious statues, "proving that it had little value outside of the spiritual," said Cesidio.

Who was the Little Flower?

St. Therese was called the "Little Flower of Jesus" because she did little sacrifices all the time to show her love for the Infant Jesus.

The Carmelite nun scattered flowers which symbolized every sacrifice or word said to God that she had made for the Lord.

For dream, she said in her autobiography was that after her death, she would return to spend "heaven on earth."

PASSING OF THE TORCH

As Teofisto Guingona Jr. leaved out as the country's vice president, Teofisto Guingona III stepped up as congressman of Bukidnon's second district. The elder Guingona recently swore his son as office at the Makati Skyline with family, including wife Marivic and son Bobby, and friends witnessing the "passing of the torch." Guingona III not only vowed to carry out his duties faithfully and conscientiously but also pledged to continue "the legacy of good governance and family tradition of public service" that their family is known for.

Rebs slaughter fighting cocks

MALOLOS CITY—Armed men claiming to be New People's Army rebels punished a businessman for not paying (extortionist) taxes by slaughtering his fighting cocks at his cock farm in Marmalin, 66.7 km north of here, police reported yesterday.

Insp. Gary Alan Ritonan, Hinapilo police chief, said 20 armed rebels raided the ROS farms of sugar planter-businessman Danilo Bautista on Sunday and slaughtered 47 fighting cocks.

Ritonan said the Bautistas house of Hinlo, a fighting cock breeder, was placed at P100,000.

Police said that two armed men entered the cock barn and told caretaker Jerry Pradanta that they would kill the game fowls of Hacienda Isa refused to pay them "taxes."

Pradanta said the companions of the two rebels clicked save the fastest sword fence of the fans and cut off the heads, and broke off the wings and breasts of the chickens between 6 to 7 p.m. Sunday.

The owner put the surviving wounded chickens to death, as they no longer were game worthy. Carlos P. Gosiaco, PDI Pinoyan Bureau

NPA puts 2 soldiers on trial for 'blood debts'

MAGA CITY—Two government soldiers captured four months ago by the communist New People's Army are being tried for so-called "blood debts" and their release will depend on the number executed deaths by the rebel court, the NPA's Rolando Jallores Command in Central Isles has said yesterday in a statement.

The government has set to initiate negotiations for the release of Army Lt. Rolando Pedelisan and PFC Ronel Lemuera have Montero as earlier reported L, the statement said.

The statement was sent to the Inquirer with a video footage showing the rebel assault on a group of soldiers led by Pedelisan on March 1 in Botaon, Thursday. Carnation Are and the latter are members of Pedelisan and Lemuera.

The rebels secured the families of the captive soldiers that they would be assisted his maintenance treatment.

'Prisoners of war'

They said Pedelisan and Lemuera would be treated as prisoners of war (POWs) with the full guarantees of the Geneva Convention and the Comprehensive Agreement for the Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CAHRIHL) that the government and the National Democratic Front signed.

On Sunday, Pedelisan's wife Lea asked top Army officials to help seek the release of her husband in time for their daughter Ana Mirele's second birthday on Aug. 26.

Lea extended her appeal to communist underground Gregorio Bond who, she said, could secure her husband's release if he were still in.

She also asked to be allowed to talk to her husband.

But Bond advised the families of the two SOA prisoners to take them over to Malacañang.

"They should address their appeal to Malacañang. Their release is now in the hands of GRP and her relatives. There was already an established manner for the successful release of POWs just like that in the case of Brent, Dilalo, Bernal and many others. They know that," he explained.

The NPA command said the "troubling image" that Pedelisan's wife had described been from the video footage of the encounter and were taken right after the rebel soldiers surrendered. It said what was shown on the video had no similarities with the images of the hostage crisis in Iraq.

Lea Pedelisan said the pictures of her husband that the SOA Command had released to media on March 18 had "troubling" similarities to TV images of Angelo de la Cruz, the Filipino overseas worker being held hostage by Iraq gunmen.

Hostage crisis

"While the Angelo de la Cruz hostage crisis symbolizes the evil results of the puppetry of the US-Arroyo regime in an imperialist war of aggression, 1L Rolando Pedelisan and Ronel Lemuera represent the brave machinery of the ruling class determined to continue armed aggression against Bayanmuna," the NPA Command said.

The video footage showed Pedelisan resting his right hand from behind some bushes. Not far from him, Lemuera, lay motionless on the ground while agitated male and female voices could be heard warning not to free as the four soldiers were already surrendering.

The video was said to have been taken at about 7 a.m. during the shooting of the news how became the encounter.

The NPA rebels are shown surrounding the seven soldiers lying prone on the ground with their hands clasped behind their heads. In one panel later, the rebels could be seen lying the hands of the captive soldiers.

The footage, shot by the rebels' media group, Kampil, also showed the two soldiers thanking the rebels for sparing their lives. An NPA commander was also shown telling them that they would not be harmed as long as they did not attempt to escape. *Jason Santander Jr., with a report from Bobby T. Mallari Jr., PDI Isnachare Lanao Bureau*

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

Debate proposed to settle House fight

By Carlito Pablo

AN ADMINISTRATION congressman has proposed that the protagonists in an impoverished contest for the chairmanship of the House appropriations committee engage in a debate.

Rep. Rhoderic Ochoa Jr. (Lakas, Isarog-at-Iba') said the issue of who between Representatives Rolando Andaya Jr. (Lakas, Camarines Sur) and Joey Salceda (Lakas, Albay) is worthy to chair the committee can be settled by the clerk presenting their positions.

"Why not ask the two petitioners to present their programs so we will know what they intend to do at the appropriations committee," Pichay said in an interview.

The appropriations committee exercises the Congress' power of the purse, taking charge of scrutinizing the annual national budget proposals presented by the Executive.

Told of the Pichay proposal, Andaya and Salceda indicated that they were not unwilling to debate.

"This is not just between me and Joey" said Andaya who claimed the committee is the previous Congress.

"If he (Andaya) agrees, I will agree," said Salceda.

Andaya has the support of Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. while Salceda is said to enjoy the backing of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

JDV (De Venecia) and GMA (Ms Arroyo) are on the same side. There will be vigorous efforts to enforce a resolution to this case," Salceda said but did not elaborate.

Andaya believes that he has the members if the committee were to come to a vote on the floor.

"Let's just put it to a vote," he said.

For the past few days, the Andaya and Salceda camps have been engaged in a battle of press releases concerning their views on such issues as the fiscal deficit.

Salceda earlier proposed that legislators resolve their P60 billion to P100 billion pork barrel funds to help the President implement her 10-point social and economic program.

Andaya has commented that imposing such a "pork holiday" on Congress would starve legislators' constituents of projects.

Salceda and Andaya have both come up with statements suggesting that the perks and privileges of appointees to government-owned and -controlled corporations should be removed to help ease the fight fiscal situation.

"In their credit, the two Bicolano legislators have not resorted to personal attacks.

Salceda said there "is hardly creativity or even civil content less (had) ordinary silliness on the body politic."

"It has screened the fundamental debate on our fiscal situation and strained fiscal policy to the front pages of our national broad sheets instead of being buried in the business pages," he said.

Atienza: Scrap Salceda's pork

THE MAYOR of the country's premier city yesterday backed sharply to proposals to cut revenue allotments to local governments, saying the best way to solve the country's budget deficit is to scrap the congressional pork barrel.

The first to be scrapped, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said, should be the pork barrel allocations of Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, who had proposed in order to reduce the internal revenue allotments (IRA) of local government units as one of the measures to reduce the country's budget deficit.

Atienza said that the "self-serving" proposal of Salceda is contrary to the constitutional provision mandating the progressive of genuine local autonomy. He also pointed out that it would be unwise if funds amounting to billions of pesos a year allocated for what he termed as "wasteful and graft prone" pork barrel projects were used to fund local development projects.

"Many of these pork barrel projects such as welding shed and basketball court do not even contribute to local development. There is no benchmark being followed in the identification of pork barrel projects except the personal or political preferences of members of Congress and it is also prone to abuse because of lack of accountability," noted Atienza.

Congress has come under fire several times in the past for alleged anomalies in the allocation and disbursement of pork barrel funds, ranging from scrapping to ghost projects.

"Our focus that caused the worsening budget deficit is the congressional pork barrel allocation. It not only serves to entrench the practice of political patronage but also wrecks havoc on the government's national development efforts," said Atienza.

Atienza also warned that reducing the IRA would hamper the daily operations of local government units.

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Chinoy traders hail Yap appointment as agri chief

THE FEDERATION of Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. has hailed the appointment of National Food Authority administrator Arthur Yap as the new agriculture secretary, the first Filipino-Chinese to be named to the Cabinet since former President Ferdinand Marcos.

Robin Ng, FFCCCII president, said it is a great statement the Chinese community is proud of Yap not only for his appointment, but also of his sterling record of government service as NFA administrator and his prior position as president of Philippine International Trading Corp. (PITC).

"His impressive record and work ethic will ensure the delivery of needed services for the people and in pursuing the food security program of the Arroyo administration which seeks to wipe out poverty and hunger in the country," Ng said.

Yap was appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo as agriculture secretary to replace Luis Lorenzo.

Ng described Yap as a "young but achievement-oriented" person with the Filipino-Chinese's values of diligence and hard work as proven by his track record at NFA and PITC, which was his first stint in government service.

"Under his administration, the NFA has exercised efficiently its regulatory and marketing functions for grains, cereals and other commodities through its offices and warehouses," Ng said.

Malcampo; 54

NEW JERSEY businessman Manuel Lim Malcampo who succumbed to heart failure last June 23 and was interred at the Loyola Memorial Park in Parañaque on July 6. He was 54.

Malcampo, native of Tambacan City and nephew of the late Sen. Rodolfo Lim, died in Manila in the midst of a visit to relatives here. He is survived by his loved ones, children and grandchildren.

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Kyamko retiring as Southcom chief; no replacement yet

By Alcuin Papa

THE ARMED forces of the Philippines Southern Command, the military's peace-keeping vanguard in southwestern Mindanao, is getting a new commander for what is expected to be a very short time.

Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko today is retiring.

The problem is it is not yet known who will replace Kyamko.

AFP Public Information Office chief Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero said a "turnover" ceremony will be held in Camp Navarro, Zamboanga City on Friday even as Kyamko's successor had yet to be named.

Kyamko, who is not a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, is set to leave the service on Aug. 2 when he reaches the mandatory retirement age of 56. Upon Kyamko's request, he will be going on leave after Friday in preparation for his retirement, Lucero said.

"General Kyamko opted for a turnover as he could prepare for his retirement. As the moment, we have not received any [word] yet on his replacement," said Lucero in a press briefing yesterday.

Kyamko took command of Southcom in April last year.

Lucero said all division commanders in Mindanao and Jolo are possible candidates to replace Kyamko.

Among those are 6th Infantry Division commander Maj. Gen. Generoso Senga (PMA Class '72), 4th Infantry Division commander Maj. Gen. Samuel Gaguim (PMA Class '72), 1st Infantry Division commander Maj. Gen. Roberto Tabigue (PMA Class '74) and Marine commander Maj. Gen. Emmanuel Teodosio (PMA Class '72).

The AFP Southern Command covers the largest area of all the commands and has almost half of the AFP's strength at its disposal. It has been at the forefront of the war against Moro secessionists in Mindanao in the last few decades. Soldiers who served at Southcom are considered as being among the most battle-hardened troops in the AFP.

Over the years, Southcom commanders had themselves been raised in battle and had earned the respect of the foot soldiers. They had gone on to become commanding generals of the Philippine Army and AFP chiefs of staff.

Some of the more prominent Southcom commanders were General Fidel V. Ramos in 1964-65, Lt. Gen. Fidel Valdez Jr. in 1968, Gen. Narciso Abaya in 1969-70, Lt. Gen. Romeo Espino in 1971-72, Lt. Gen. Jose Magno Vistan in 1973-74, Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Biazon in 1975-76, Lt. Gen. Fortunato Abat in 1977-78, Lt. Gen. Jose Calimlim in 1979-80, Lt. Gen. Ramon Montaño in 1981-82, Lt. Gen. Manuel Yan in 1983-84, Lt. Gen. Jose Almonte in 1985-86, Lt. Gen. Renato de Villa in 1987-88, Lt. Gen. Alexander Aguirre in 1989-90, Lt. Gen. Arturo Enrile in 1991-92, Lt. Gen. Cesar Nebrida in 1993-94, Lt. Gen. Jose Calimlim in 1995-96, Lt. Gen. Ernesto Mata in 1997-98, Lt. Gen. Roberto Rodolfo in 1999-2000, Lt. Gen. Benjamin Defensor in 2001-02 and Lt. Gen. Narciso Abaya in 2003-04.

Kyamko's successor will be the 19th Southcom commander.

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Jaylo's anti-drug group faces abolition

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE PHILIPPINE Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) is set to abolish its Task Force Hunter following the appointment of the group's chief, Reynaldo Jaylo, as Dreamboy Mangagpal-Arroyo's point man in the war against illegal recruiters.

Sun STAR Director Anselmo Avenido Jr. said the abolition of Jaylo's 24-man team was primarily a result of complaints that its members were involved in extortion and other such excesses.

"We had been receiving these reports [for a] long time[and] had been calling his [Jaylo's] attention," Avenido told the Inquirer. "But he would just deny them without conducting any inquiry. He would just say that the accused were not part of his team."

Avenido said he was just awaiting official word from Director Jesus Azotea before he abolishes the task force and reassigns its members to regular units of the PDEA.

TF Hunter's demise will be the climax of the rift between Avenido and Jaylo which began with an alleged plot to assassinate the PDEA chief.

Avenido had received phone calls from an unidentified man who told him that two of Jaylo's operatives were planning to kill him.

The PDEA chief then phoned Jaylo to tell him about the threat but his deputy apparently gave the call different[ly].

Jaylo then went public to deny the plot. He said it may have been Avenido's own men who were planning to do him in.

Avenido admitted the assassination controversy was just the tip of a larger conflict between him and Jaylo.

"He was supposed to be my subordinate but he always went on his own when it came to anti-drug operations," Avenido said. "One time I issued a memo on this but he just ignored it."

Jaylo was a late addition to the Arroyo administration's campaign against drug-trafficking, which is led by the PDEA.

Soon after the announced the crackdown on illegal drugs in July last year, the President acceded to suggestions that she include the "Four Aces" group of now Sen. Alfredo Lim and Jaylo in the campaign. Aside from Lim and Jaylo, the aces members were former Senator Robert Barbers and police Maj. Lorio Margallo.

GMA party rethinking merger with Lakas-CMD

By Cecilio Pedia

THE KAMPI ng Mabuting Pilipino (Kampi) is rethinking its planned merger with the Lakas-CMD party, which had been regarded as a done deal.

Instead, Kampi, which is headed by Rep. Ronaldo Puno (Antipolo), son of President Macapagal-Arroyo's political strategist, has started exploratory talks with the Liberal Party for a possible partnership.

"We're looking at the prospect of entering into a coalition with the LP," said Kampi spokesperson Rep. Rodolfo Mitra (Manila).

Mitra told reporters about the Kampi-LP talks yesterday after discussions were held previously between the two parties.

Rep. Abraham Mitra (LP-Aklan), confirmed the Kampi-LP talks, which he described as "initial and exploratory."

"We're exploring the prospects for a coalition," Mitra said.

The LP is one of the partners of the Lakas-CMD in the K-4 coalition which the former administration rode to victory in the last election. Lakas' president is Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. although Mitra said the Liberals felt they were "among the marginalized parties in the House."

The LP does not have the numbers of the Nationalist People's Coalition, another key coalition partner of the Lakas-CMD.

Dr. Velicio earlier said the Lakas-CMD would absorb Kampi, the political party President Arroyo launched in 1998 when she was senator.

Lakas-CMD stalwart Rep. Prospero Pichay (Negros del Sur) said Kampi had the "potential of rising to become the dominant party in the country."

"Kampi is a mix of experience and youthful dynamism as reflected by its membership," said Pichay, noting that the Kampi bloc in the House was composed of third-termers, second-termers and neophytes.

Asked if he was being recruited by Kampi, Pichay said: "I have been invited and I have high regard for Kampi."

Kasosa as the legal counsel for Kampi, Pres-Christ Arroyo and Dr. Velicio, Pichay didn't say whether he was joining Kampi.

Dr. Velicio had said the merger between Lakas and Kampi was to be formalized on July 25, the eve of Ms. Arroyo's State-of-the-Nation Address before a joint session of Congress.

But Miranda said Kampi would hold a general assembly on July 25 to decide whether or not to push through with the merger.

"It will be up to the members to decide the fate of the party," Miranda said.

Kampi claims a total membership of 7.5 legislators and plans to undertake a reorganization at the local government level.

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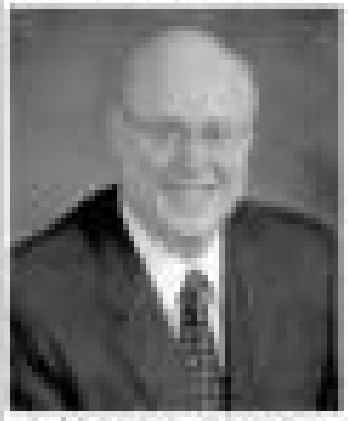

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The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozon

War on terror made US safer, Bush says

OAK RIDGE, Tenn.—Under fire for intelligence failures at home and abroad, President George W. Bush tried on Monday to convince American voters he has made them safer since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks and told them "we were right to go into Iraq."

Faced with polls that show many believe the terror threat against them has increased due to the Iraq war, Bush argued that wars against Iraq, Afghanistan and al-Qaida have made them safer, as has diplomacy that led Libya to surrender its weapons of mass destruction programs.

"Today because America has acted, and because America has led, the forces of terror and tyranny have suffered defeat after defeat, and America and the world are safer," Bush told employees at Oak Ridge National Laboratories, where components of Libya's nuclear program are being stored.

Bush's war against terrorism was supposed to be an easy sell on the campaign trail, and is an important plank of his reelection effort.

But the Iraq war has spawned deadly unrest, insurgents have overrun NBC News/Wall St. Journal poll, 51 percent of Americans said they felt the threat of terror was increased, not reduced.

His Democratic opponent, Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, responded by saying Bush's policies had made the country less safe by failing to ensure nuclear material that could fall into the hands of terrorists and by allowing North Korea to become more of a threat.

"It's not enough just to give speeches. America will only be safer when we get results," he told supporters in Boston.

A Senate intelligence committee report last week said U.S. intelligence agencies overstated the threat of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, one of the White House's chief justifications for the war which removed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein from power. None was ever found.

"Although we have not found stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, we were right to go into Iraq," Bush said. "We removed a dictated enemy of America who had the capability of producing weapons of mass murder and could have passed that capability to terrorists bent on acquiring them."

Democrats have used the report to accuse Bush of exaggerating evidence used to justify war against Iraq.

Republicans said the Bush administration was a victim of bad intelligence.

Bush said that his politics since the Sept. 11 attacks on New York and Washington have led to an Afghanistan headed toward elections and cooperation against al-Qaida with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

But problems persist in Afghanistan's attempt to hold elections after years of Taliban rule. A bomb blast killed at least five people and wounded 34 in the southern Afghan city of Qandahar on Sunday, raising new concern about security for landmark polls in October.

Bush said al-Qaeda was receiving help from "some regimes in the Middle East" and that Saudi Arabia with little opposition and that the Saudi government is now going after al-Qaida in its own country.

Critics say Saudi Arabia only began responding in earnest to the al-Qaeda threat after repeated attacks by militants.

After taking a look at countless party intended for use in Libya's nuclear weapons program, Bush said its decision to disarm unconventional weapons was "encouraging evidence that nations can abandon those ambitions and choose a better way." Reuters

Selling at Sotheby's

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Most Iraqis nix US presence

BAGHDAD—A public opinion poll found Tuesday that almost two-thirds of Iraqis oppose the presence of the US-led military in their country, but many fear their departure would lead to even greater violence.

The survey by the private Iraq Center for Research and Strategic Studies (ICRSS) released since some Iraqis misunderstand key things about US troops and the perilous security situation across the country.

Many say percent of those surveyed said they would feel safer if the US-led multinational forces left. But only 41 percent said they would feel more secure if they departed, a sharp change from the last ICRSS survey in April when 53 percent gave a positive answer to the same question.

Asked if Iraq was moving closer to peace and stability, 63 percent said the situation had worsened and only 12 percent said it had improved since April.

The poll, conducted from June 20-27 among 1,500 Iraqis, also revealed optimism among Iraqis about the interim government which took over from the US-led occupation in June and is set to rule Iraq until Iraq's elections.

The poll found that 76 percent of Iraqis said they would feel better about Iraq once they regained sovereignty.

But in cities with large Sunni Muslim populations, considered breeding grounds for the insurgency, large numbers said they felt the United States had picked Iraq's caretaker government. AFP

SACRED VILLAGE
The village of Chak Chak sacred to Zoroastrians lies on the edge of the desert central Iran near the city of Yazd 400 km southeast of Tehran, and is seen in this photograph taken on June 9. Zoroastrian say the sacred spring at Chak Chak, a shelter perched beneath a towering cliff face in the plains desert of central Iran, has had more of its miraculous healing powers. AFP

Madrid bombing suspect talks about murky world of terrorism

MADRID—The man who claims to be the mastermind of the Madrid train bombings has been talking up a storm, giving eavesdropping Italian investigators new insights into the murky world of terrorism.

Rachid Daoudi Abouali, a 32-year-old man known as Mohamed the Egyptian, was arrested June 7 on an international warrant issued by Spanish authorities. The Italians also picked up a 21-year-old Moroccan, Tahir Youssef, as an alleged accomplice.

Six weeks before his arrest, and while in custody, Italian investigators monitored his conversations. He was picked up after wiretaps indicated he was planning another attack on a undisclosed location.

The day after his arrest, the Italian Interior Minister Giuseppe Pisanu said in a statement that Daoudi showed was "probably among the principal authors" of the Madrid bombings, and that he "was preparing other attacks."

Pisanu did not elaborate, and Italian authorities denied published reports that the Italian military system uses the probable target.

The March 11 bombs, planted on four commuter trains in Madrid, killed 190 people and injured more than 2,000 people.

"The Madrid attack is my project," the Egyptian told the Milanese after his arrest, according to a transcript published last week in the Milan newspaper Corriere della Sera. "The project has cost me a lot of study, it took me 2 1/2 years."

"Some have died like martyrs, eight others have been arrested. They are my best friends," according to the transcripts.

The terrorist are believed to have died in the attack, but seven suspects blew themselves up in an apartment near Madrid as police stormed it to arrest it in connection with the bombings.

Fifty-one people have been detained in Spain in connection to the attacks, including a new suspect arrested Monday near the Madrid suburb of Leganes—where the seven suspected killed themselves. Sixteen of those—mostly Moroccans—are in jail on provisional charges.

In the wiretaps, the Egyptian speaks of his efforts to recruit suicide bombers and die in pursuance of martyrdom, but, after his arrest, he said he expected a sentence of "at least 30 years. I, too, am implicated." AP

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INQUIRER

Organized by

Argentine rights expert named UN adviser on prevention of genocide

UNITED NATIONS—Former Argentine rights expert Juan Mendez, who was tortured by Argentina's military government in the 1970s, has been named to a new UN post that will provide early warning about situations anywhere in the world that could result in genocide, the United Nations secretary-general said.

Mendez, a lawyer who was twice imprisoned in his native Argentina for political and professional activities, worked with Human Rights Watch for 15 years and is currently the president of the International Center for Transitional Justice in New York, which assists countries pursuing accountability for mass atrocities or human rights abuses.

"I'm very honored, and at the same time the responsibility is beginning to weigh on me. It's an important job," Mendez told The Associated Press from London.

Secretary-general Kofi Annan sent a letter informing the Security Council of his decision to appoint Mendez as special adviser on the prevention of genocide in March as the world was about to mark the 10th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide, Annan, head of UN peacekeeping at the time of the 1994 genocide, has apologized for failing to intervene to prevent the slaughter of at least 500,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus by the Hutu-extremist government then in power.

Mendez said that the United Nations can play a crucial role in preventing future genocides because of its reach.

"There is no other international organization that can play a preventative role," he said. AP

MENDEZ

Arabs to pressure UN on barrier

UNITED NATIONS—Arab states on Monday called for an emergency session of the UN General Assembly to demand that Israel comply with a World Court ruling that its West Bank security barrier is illegal and must be dismantled.

The Arab Group of governments at the United Nations called on the 191-nation assembly to meet on Friday to take up a draft resolution seeking to implement last week's ruling.

The International Court of Justice in The Hague said in an "advisory opinion" last Friday that the planned 666-km barrier violates international law by cutting deep into West Bank land occupied and dotted with settlements by Israel since the 1967 Middle East War.

The court said Israel must pay reparations to Palestinians for damage created by the barrier's construction on Palestinian lands and suggested that both the General Assembly and the Security Council consider further actions to ensure Israeli compliance with its opinion.

General Assembly resolutions do not carry the weight of international law and so cannot threaten noncomplying nations with sanctions, as can measures adopted by the 15-nation UN Security Council.

But the Palestinian UN observer, Nasser al-Kidwa, said the Palestinians would wait before taking their case to the Security Council in search of "additional measures to be taken to end the current illegal situation."

He denied the delay was intended to put off a council debate until after the Nov. 2 US elections, as some Palestinian officials have said.

Washington, Israel's closest ally, has veto power in the Security Council and has used it 38 times since 1972 to kill resolutions critical of the Jewish state. Some Palestinians may fear the issue could become mired in election-year politics. Reuters

Sharon threatens new elections

JERUSALEM—Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on Monday asked the moderate Labor Party to join his shaky coalition, an alliance that would strongly boost chances for a withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005.

Sharon worried hardliners in his Likud Party who oppose a partnership with Labor said a Gaza pullout, that he would call early elections if they stood in his way.

The prime minister and Labor leader Shimon Peres met for an hour Monday. Their talks said a coalition deal is expected quickly, despite possible wrangling over senior Cabinet jobs and Labor's demands for changes in government policy.

Labor wants to resume contacts with the Palestinians on the withdrawal plan, saying, while Sharon insists on a unilateral pullout and refuses to negotiate with Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority.

However, Sharon and Peres—the last two members of Israel's founding generation still active in politics—are expected to set aside their differences. The 80-year-old Peres, a former prime minister, is seen as eager for a last chance to shape the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and Sharon needs Peres for political survival. AP

WorldBriefs

Bird flu cases in Thailand

BANGKOK—Thailand on Monday confirmed two more cases of the lethal form of bird flu, the latest in a spate that has claimed lives of a third and of the worst outbreak that left 24 people dead in Asia. Officials said the H5N1 strain of the virus had been found in two cantonal provinces and some 300 chickens were killed by fire to prevent any further spreading of the infection. "More than 100 chickens have been culled in Pathum Thani and another 200 culled in Ratchburi [western province]," Yukon Limlamthong, the director general for the livestock department, said. Four other outbreaks were confirmed as being cases of H5N1 in central and northern Thailand last week but the authorities claimed the outbreak was under control. AFP

Explosions in Baghdad

BAGHDAD—Several explosions were heard Tuesday in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, and a cloud of dust could be seen rising above the city called Green Zone. It was not immediately clear if powerful explosion occurred in the area, which has the headquarters of the former US-led occupation authorities. The US and British embassies are now located there. At least one of the blasts appeared to have been triggered by a hand grenade tossed at a US patrol in central Baghdad, said Master Sgt. David Larsen of the 1st Cavalry Division, which is responsible for Baghdad. About an hour later, a blast occurred in the southeast part of Baghdad, injuring three Iraqi civilians and damaging a building, said Lt. Col. Jim Hutton. The source of the explosions was unclear. It was not immediately clear what caused the other blasts. There were no immediate reports of injuries. AP

37 stranded Africans in Italy

AGRIGENTO, Italy—The case of 37 African stowaways who reached another in a ship in the Mediterranean in hopes of asylum in Europe took a strange turn after Italian authorities finally arrested them. They are ordered two rebel workers and a crew member, and indicated some were Islamic and about coming from Sudan's war-torn Darfur region. The developments came after days of debate among Italy, Germany, Malta and rights groups over who should take in the immigrants, who had been aboard a ship run by Cap Anamur aid agency since June 29. The German group said some identified themselves as refugees from Darfur, which the United Nations has described as suffering the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Under pressure, Italy agreed to let the ship dock Monday—near the city on Sicily's southern coast. The first medical examination found the immigrants and three various groups that had demanded they be allowed into Italy. AP

New UN envoy to Iraq

UNITED NATIONS—Pakistan's ambassador to the United States was chosen as the new UN envoy to Iraq, replacing a diplomat who died in a Baghdad bombing last year. Secretary General Kofi Annan has selected Ashraf Jehangir Qazi for the dangerous job, UN associate spokesperson Marie Okabe said Monday. She said Qazi, who has held a number of key posts around the world, including as Pakistan's ambassador to Washington, was chosen from a short list of three candidates after extensive consultations. Annan has had difficulty finding someone for the job. He said last month that several candidates initially said "yes" but later changed their minds after their families objected. AP

Reader's Digest MONTHLY DRAW WINNERS

UN: 15M children lose parent to AIDS

BANGKOK—The AIDS epidemic has robbed 15 million children of one or both parents and reversed a trend to avoid lower orphan due to better health and nutrition, a UN report said on Tuesday.

With HIV infection rates rising and the treatable disease taking 10 years to kill without treatment, an estimated 18.4 million children will have lost at least one parent by 2010, according to the United report released at the 15th International AIDS Conference.

"It is a tidal wave of children who have lost one or more of their parents," Carol Bellamy, executive director of Unicef, the United Nations children's agency, said.

"Fifteen million globally close to 11 million in sub-Saharan Africa alone," she said. "It has the possibility of destabilizing societies quite dramatically."

Without the AIDS epidemic, which has already killed 10 million people worldwide and infected 38 million, the numbers of orphans would be falling because of better health care and nutrition, AIDS has reversed the trend.

Much of the AIDS meeting that began on Sunday has been focused on money, improving antiretroviral access to life-prolonging drugs and wrangling over whether abstinence or condoms is the best way to prevent new infections.

But children's activists argue that the plight of orphans and vulnerable children is not getting the attention it deserves within the overall AIDS effort.

"In some ways orphans are one of the orphaned issues at this conference," said Dr Joanne Carter, legislative director of Results, an international anti-hunger and anti-poverty group.

"It's clear that what is left in the wake of the AIDS pandemic is these kids. Those kids are the futures of their society and they have been largely forgotten by the global community," she added.

UN Rep. Barbara Lee, a Democrat from California and the only member of Congress at the week-long meeting, dined that the orphan crisis as "mind-boggling."

"The world cannot stand by and watch this occur," said Lee, the author of legislation to help orphans and vulnerable children which has passed the US House of Representatives and is attracting support in the Senate.

At this, where the AIDS epidemic began relatively recently and HIV prevalence is still low, the number of orphans has dropped since 1990. But if HIV/AIDS expands, as many expect to four it will, so too will the numbers of orphans.

More than any other cause of death, AIDS is more likely to deprive children of both parents. They face discrimination because a parent has died of AIDS, abandonment if relatives cannot or will not care for them, and the responsibility of caring for younger siblings. They may be infected themselves.

They may also be deprived of guidance and education and will be more vulnerable to violence and exploitation.

The Unicef report calls for more funding for programs to help families and the community cope with the crisis and to ensure closer co-ordination, breakthrough and legislation to protect orphans.

"Much too little is being done," said Bellamy.

"Simple things could make a big difference when it comes to AIDS orphans and could give these children an opportunity for the future."

More than 17,000 delegates are attending the meeting that ends on Friday.

Reuters

BIGGEST STATUE

The world's biggest statue, a 152-metre high bronze of Hanuman, is to be built in northern India's Uttar Pradesh state. The statue will be three times higher than the Statue of Liberty.

Poll: Voters think Bush decisive, Kerry intelligent

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush is viewed by more American voters as decisive and arrogant than Democratic rival John Kerry, according to an Associated Press poll. Yet, even more voters view Kerry as intelligent.

Asked who makes them feel more optimistic about the future, slightly more voters chose Bush than Kerry, the poll conducted for the AP by Ipsos-Public Affairs found. Both candidates are viewed as wealthy by nearly all voters, with slightly more saying Bush is wealthy than Kerry.

Two-thirds in the poll think the US president is decisive, the biggest character advantage he has over Kerry, but a majority, 52 percent, also say they think Bush is arrogant.

The poll asked voters to describe how they would or would not use each of seven words—likable, intelligent, decisive, compassionate, honest, arrogant and wishy—to describe Bush and then Kerry.

Kerry and Bush are evenly matched as qualities like compassion, honesty and likability. But Bush has a 22 point edge over Kerry on the question of who is decisive. Two-thirds said Bush is decisive and fewer than half said that of Kerry. Only two, thirds of Democrats said Kerry is decisive.

As Kerry prepares to introduce himself to the public at the Democratic National Convention in two weeks, one of his biggest obstacles is convincing voters he can provide the kind of firm leadership needed in a time of war and terrorism.

AP

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, July 14, 2004
15th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Is 10:5-7, 13-16
Gospel: Mt 11:25-27

At one occasion Jesus said, "Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I praise you, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to simple people. Yes, Father, this is what pleased you.

"Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Commentary:

Today's reading follows directly after yesterday's. It is when he had spoken of the dismal failure of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum that he suddenly burst out, "Father, lord of heaven and earth, I praise you, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to simple people."

But "simple people" must refer to something else—"children" or "babes" as translated in the more popular Bible. Here the meaning is not to be understood literally. The children mentioned were not only children but also the uneducated people. Later, St. Paul would write, "For unto deemed signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we preached Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1Cor 1:22-24). The theme is a different kind of wisdom. "God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom... God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise" (1Cor 1:25, 27).

We must not be against human wisdom. We should do all we can to develop intelligence as a gift of God and striving gifts. But it has to be a God of wisdom that somehow open to submission beyond itself to a deeper wisdom that must look at first like foolishness. Sometimes we fold our arms and say, "I don't understand," and sometimes and ask a question that goes straight to the heart. To each on these, said Jesus, the King does of God has been revealed.

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PCGG to appeal US court ruling …

Front page A1

US District Judge Manuel Real ordered Monday that the $40 million under the name of Arelma Corp., a Panama based dummy company set up by Marcos in 1972, be given to the most active victims as compensation.

In a statement, PCGG Commissioner Haidee Cuevas-Yap said the commission would appeal the ruling to the US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Free motion denied

In his ruling, Real ordered that the funds, now held in escrow, be transferred to an account set up by the court in 1995 when a Honolulu jury awarded $2 billion to 9,539 Filipinos who filed suit saying Marcos was responsible for summary executions, disappearances and torture during his 14-year reign under martial law.

"It would be unjust to prevent the class of persons (victims), summarily executed and disappeared from receiving the proceeds — to put really exactly their judgment," Real said in his 23-page ruling.

Real also denied a motion from Arelma that sought to freeze assets supposedly belonging to Marcos, according to court papers filed on Monday.

The class suit was filed in 1986 in Hawaii in behalf of the Filipinos. After the trial, a Honolulu jury awarded the plaintiffs $2 billion in 1995.

The US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the judgment on appeal. After the 90-day period for a final appeal to the US Supreme Court lapsed on March 16, 1997, the judgment attained finality.

Not a single cent

To date, however, none of the claimants has received a single cent from the $2 billion award which has reportedly grown to $3.7 billion, including interest.

The PCGG has blocked the trial on the Arelma money. It said that since the funds were part of the Marcos ill-gotten wealth, they should be forfeited in favor of the government.

The PCGG yesterday filed in the Sandiganbayan a motion for summary judgment on the forfeiture of the Arelma funds. Cuevas did not give further comment.

But lawyers of the class suit claimants praised Real's order.

"The decision of the US district court today clears the way for 9,539 Filipino (human rights) victims to receive compensation of $40 million," said US lawyer Robert Swift.

In a statement, Swift pointed out that despite having obtained an award back in 1995, the martial law victims had not received any compensation.

"We are elated that we can finally distribute money to the victims and their families.

18-year crusade

"There has been an 18-year crusade to obtain a judgment and collect it."

"It is the beginning, not the end of recovery efforts," Swift added.

Swift's Filipino counterpart, Rod Domingo, slammed the government for blocking the award of the Arelma funds to the victims.

"The Philippine government has been the chief impediment to the collection of the judgment," said Domingo. "The government claims all Marcos money belongs to it and may should go to the Filipino human rights victims."

Domingo said the government "spent millions in legal fees opposing the recovery of loot of the victims."

Early this year, the government recovered $684 million of the secret Marcos deposits in Swiss banks, the proceeds of which it has earmarked for agrarian reform. Of the amount, it set aside P9 billion for martial law victims.

But Congress failed to pass a special law setting aside about P8 billion for the victims.

Separate asset

The $40 million is, however, separate from the $684 million in Swiss assets that the Supreme Court awarded to the Philippine government in July 2003.

The funds were originally held by Arelma which Marcos established in 1972— the same year he declared martial law in the Philippines — as a shell corporation with $2 million in illegally-diverted money.

The $2 million from Arelma was placed in a New York brokerage firm and, through the management of a Swiss financier, grew to $40 million by 2000.

The financier, Jean-Louis Iten, testified in a deposition last year that he managed the account for Marcos. The $40 million was frozen in 2000.

Ziegler had argued there was no definitive evidence linking Marcos to either account.

Real disagreed.

"Arelma was controlled by Ferdinand E. Marcos or his representatives during his lifetime," Real said in his ruling. "Arelma served no legitimate purpose other than to hide the assets of Ferdinand E. Marcos."

Estate of Rogelio Roxas

Also making a claim to the $40 million was lawyer Lionel Cothiaux, who represented the estate of Rogelio Roxas, a Filipino-treasure hunter who contended that the Marcos assets deposited into Arelma included money from the sale of items stolen from him, including a diamond encrusted gold Buddha statue and some $22 billion worth of gold bullion. Roxas died in 1992.

Harvey Reader, the Honolulu attorney representing the Filipinos, said Real's findings and conclusions were so strong that she was confident that the plaintiffs will prevail on appeal.

"I think the delay in justice is very difficult for those people in the Philippines and their families," she said. "We hopefully that we're going to see some distributions in the very near future."

No money seen

The plaintiffs are unlikely to receive any of the money any time soon.

Reader did not know when any of the plaintiffs or their heirs would receive the money because Arelma's attorneys had said they would appeal the decision.

Lawyer for Arelma Corp. said an appeal was likely. Arelma lawyer Jay Ziegler declined further comment.

The issues now will be transferred to the court of appeals. Lawyers of the plaintiffs would have to file motions before any money is disbursed and those motions could be contested, dragging the process further.

Once Arelma appeals Real's ruling, lawyers could then seek to have the transfer reversed and the assets frozen again until the outcome is decided.

Reader still called the ruling a victory.

"This is very significant because we have been fighting for years," she said. "What we're trying to do is make the human rights case meaningful and the only way it will truly be meaningful is if the victims receive something."

With reports by AP Reuters, PDI Research

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Political prisoner

THERE is no rhyme or reason behind the Sandiganbayan's decision to place Joseph Estrada under house arrest rather than crude politics. In its order, the anti-graft court took "judicial notice" of Estrada's "clout," and made some nimby-minded references to "other heads of state." To top it all, it astrepted its make the decision tantamount to a pledge of good

EDITORIAL

behavior on Estrada's part. He is not to "promote, provoke or support, in any manner, any public disturbance or allow his name to be used to whipping up a feeling of discontent," the court instructed, or else he will be brought back to Camp Capinpin or the Veteran's Memorial Medical Center.

The clearest analogy we can think of to refute the Sandiganbayan has done, would be to compare its decision to a court in say, Columbia or the United States, ordering the confinement of a drug lord or Mafia kingpin to a honey hotel, out of fear that the gangster's armed goons might assassinate court or other officials. It is a political bargain in the crudest sense, a quid pro quo on political grounds and not based on justice. It disturbs us that political considerations could be so blatantly taken into consideration in a judicial action.

The Sandiganbayan could have extended the privilege of house arrest to Estrada on other grounds: health or his residual status as a former head of state. Nothing more or less would have sufficed to justify such a decision. But in taking "judicial notice" of circumstances beyond the court's competence to determine, and beyond it's authority to take into consideration—by creeping into the dangerous field of politics and political considerations—the court strayed into the territory of the executive departments and out of the safe harbor of the law.

The former president is facing trial and in detention because he has been charged with high crimes, crimes which require the imposition of high penalties that his freedom must be curtailed while he is being tried. In order to reduce the risk of flight, in issuing a decision in the manner it did, the Sandiganbayan has turned him from a defendant facing the strict application of justice into a political prisoner, open refuse the squeeze is being put.

And for what? In order to arrest—not even extract, but extort, in true gangster style—his cooperation in guaranteeing some sort of breathing room for the government.

The Sandiganbayan does not exist as an instrument of intimidation in order to accomplish political gains. It is there to try cases of criminal behavior that betrays public service. It does not exist in order to meddle in the field of politics, as that meddlesome and irritating political busybox reminds that way. The Sandiganbayan exists to advance the interests of justice through the thorough application of the law. The political instruments of the state exist in turn to guarantee peace and order and the safety of society, including the court.

A line has been crossed, chimerically dangerously blurred, and a decision issued that dishonors the justice system and, we might add, to the process given Estrada even more ammunition for his claim that he is a victim of persecution and not impersonal justice.

Even more galling is that the Sandiganbayan decision, if it were going to be made anyway, ignored scenarios of arguments that could have kept the court within the safe realm of the law and prevented it from jumping the fence that divides law enforcement from political operations. The question, for example, of whether granting Estrada house arrest violates the equal protection clause of the Constitution, has been answered by at least one leading constitutionalist, who argued that being a former head of state, Estrada deserves the protection other heads of state might receive, and that could potentially include house arrest.

Instead, the court went from the high road to the low road. And now the public is left to wonder and hear how, after having sunk so low as to see like a political dilettante, much lower the court will go henceforth. It is a justifiable fear, and one requiring the scrutiny of the Supreme Court. We do not think that as it stands, the Sandiganbayan decision's arguments can withstand statutory and serious legal scrutiny.

GMA has power of life and death over her 'cabalen'

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE WORLD media got smothered by the Arroyo administration on the release, by persuasion, of Angelo de la Cruz. And so the newspapers and television and radio newsmen, including Cielo, registered the wonderful news in their Sunday editions. There was an eruption of joy all over the world, especially in the Philippines. The next day, the columnists praised the government and the (one) millionaire for reaching an agreement on the hostage.

But, don't throw off strong. De la Cruz had not been released, he remained in captivity; the Philippine government had not agreed to send Iraqis in humanitarian contingent in Iraq. Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas spoke about her meeting with striking communications and "whitewashing suddenly dimmed up. And hand, the media dutifully reported their own lies, first in Monday's editions.

"That's what you get for believing the Arroyo administration," quipped a reader. "It already has a record of not telling the truth, so you should have known better."

Because the opinion columns have an early deadline that the news pages, they were not able to make corrections in the Monday editions. And most of the people, including this site, were singing adoration for he in Cruz's release in the opinion pages while the front pages reported that there was no such happy ending.

What happened was that the Iraqi militants secretly extended by 48 hours the deadline for the Philippine government to recall its contingent (or have their July 20 or else they would behead De la Cruz.

Poor De la Cruz. he could lose his head for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. He only wanted to earn a living for his family. He doesn't have any ideology; he probably doesn't even understand what the war in Iraq is all about. She had back was shot he is a Filipino hostage, helpless in Iraq, although in reality they are helping Iraqis.

President Macapagal-Arroyo can save him merely by sending home the Philippine contingent, which is composed of scientists. Like God, she has the power of life and death over him, her countrymen and her countrymates. But as of this writing, she doesn't want to call them home, thus making his life of no consequence.

She had promised that he last Thursday, and she does that she would do everything in her power to save him, and story hollowed her. But can easily fulfill her promise by agreeing to skip before the 20-date Filipino force in Iraq. And she will bring untold happiness to De la Cruz's family and the Filipino nation, no such as at least the rest of the world. But so far, she has refused to use her life-giving powers. Why?

What is so difficult about sending home a group of Filipinos who are embedded to go around the world doing good deeds?

They shouldn't have been in Iraq in the first place. The wisest place to send to to send them have stayed out to the first. It was a bandwagon for the armigerie of those dominoes has ever been found in Iraq. America and its coalition of the willing (or the bribed) went there on justification for the invasion of Iraq. The thousands of people—Iraqi, American, and other nationalities—who died in Iraq died for nothing.

The Philippines' biggest blunder itself is extricating from Iraq. It has already turned over the government to the Iraqis. So what are we Filipinos doing there?

After promising that she would use every thing in her power to save De la Cruz, how can GMA face Mrs. de la Cruz and the rest of the family and all her cabalen if she hopeless attack doesn't succeed?

She says Filipino and foreign negotiators are doing everything in their power to get De la Cruz freed. There is only one simple, easy thing to do, send the Filipino contingent home. But she recognizes that it is not within her power to do it because it is President Arroyo who has. But she hesitates to use that power, although she has not hesitated to use other powers she was not authorized to use during the elections. How sincere was she when she promised Mrs. de la Cruz that she would do everything in her power to save her husband just to prove that she will not have to resort to extinct?

Some pro-administration congressmen said in yesterday's Kapihan sa Manila Bay if the Philippine contingent is sent home, it will cause De la Cruz, it would put the lives of other Filipinos at risk. They said other Filipinos would be kidnapped and exchanged for their other abductees. Some sacrifices are necessary in reconstruction, they said.

But is it wise to say these things if it is not your family member who is in danger of being put to death, is it easy to be brave when it is somebody else's relative whose life is on the line. When will they say if it is their brother or sister instead of the husband of a relative?

The administration has flown him to Cruz and a brother of Angelo de la Cruz is crying, accompanied by his Tondo. But when can they do these? They don't have any powers to save De la Cruz. it is President Arroyo who has. She doesn't even want him to leave the Philippines. All she has to do to order the recall of the Filipino contingent by July 20.

So why are we agree on that so he in Cruz will be freed? There's reputation by them. In business dealings, a deal is a deal. The deadline was Aug. 20. The original schedule will still be followed. De la Cruz will be alive and everybody will be happy.

Footnote to a betrayal

(This was supposed to have come out Monday, but it got waylaid by the Angkol-ok in Cruz mansion, hence the late news.)

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I NORMALLY do not like to rub it in, for there are some things in Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman's farewell resignation that demand sensitivity.

Soliman herself appeared teary-eyed before the cameras and talked about leaving Imelda behind. "Of course it was no picnic. I did not expect it. I did tell this to the President, O Eh! a matter of betrayal." But at least, she said, she was bequeathing a Department of Social Welfare and Development that had the virtue of having won applause. "We can proudly say that we have not allowed our work to be politicized."

What made the gift hard to swallow was that it was Soliman , one supporter said, who got the NGOs to woo GMA, particularly in Cebu. Indeed, Gov. Gwen de Jesus de Garcia says Soliman was in dire praise, saying Soliman had been an exemplary government official. Soliman herself said she was accepting GMA's decision since "the interest of the country is higher than my ego."

Frankly, I cannot understand why Soliman should feel betrayed.

First off, why should you never announce who is so obviously a traps and be surprised that she acts like one? GMA's appointments of familiar Garcia to the CHED is already proposed to be a political deal. It's payback time. De Garcia used his popularity to boost GMA, how he can have his pick of the lot. He happened to take a liking to the DSWD dinky-ucking.

In his position, most of all he's former pillar of civil society who fought long, to what GMA's descent into consummate traps area over the past years? The elections themselves offer abundant proof of it. GMA deserving the public about are running, taking to William Boracay et al. Danny Bonaya, who throughout he should have been in the senatorial ticket, also tried "I was betrayed!" Lind recently using taxpayers' money to campaign. Of course, the list take

control the corruption on its book among the other government agencies. It's not as if GMA is a sincerely epileptic who tells his believing a scorpion will come to his scorpion.

Second off, why should you feel betrayed that GMA has acted like a traps when your only ambition is to be a traps? Duh.

At the very least, that is what being treated of for helping GMA win, especially in Cebu country. Cebu is not a revolting glory, other than from a traps perspective, it is an ignominious deficit, from a principled viewpoint. It is a province of traps and trapos. Indeed, Cebu is all an unpopular one, can do better in a province other than her own. Cebu represents manipulation and cheating, not approval and consensus. But what does registering to be registered voters, or the Comelec engagement, or those collecting dues, the entire principle De Castro is applying?

As the very most, I never thought I'd hear a former NGO worker, not to speak of leader, grow that the government post she has headed has been free of politics. I just agree that it is an accomplishment to keep a government office free from partisan politics, or the narrow kind that has to do with administration and "opposition," but I cannot agree that it is admirable—or possible—to keep it free from politics altogether. At least if he politics is meant raising questions not just about the how but the why.

The concept of a good government official as a "neutral" arbiter or a "team player" is a thoroughly embarrassing, if not tragic, one. It betrays a level of silence in the face of politics. The good government official, one concept says, is one who goes along with the boss, whatever she does, in the interest. But why in

earth should there be the only opinion? Why should a good government official display only the properties of a robot? Why shouldn't a good government official be free to exercise moral judgment and a brain when it comes to that? Unexplained!

The things me to the third and most important point about the issue of betrayal. Which is: Why should you discover betrayal only when it has to do with you personally and not when it is committed by the government itself?

I've harped on this before. You want to talk betrayal, you have to talk of how Soliman and Cielo Morales began what they used to fight for, as civil society, as citizens and as plain human beings, and never raised a peep against the shame. GMA proved to be The Big Betrayer. A peep against GMA's embrace of George W. Bush's "war against terror," which dissolves among others a genocidal war against the Muslims of the South. That was why I took exception to Soliman's statement to the press last year about bringing repose the kids savaged by new incidents. Bringing was to kids by itself is good, but doing so after making merit the victims of a genocide not to adding insult to injury is to me being apolitical, it is being cynical.

There never raised a peep against GMA declaring Bush's invasion of Iraq, they never raised a peep about GMA posing among snipers killed in classroom or exercising a fascination to store points with the hilltop-ravaged Chinese communists; they never raised a peep against Jose Pidal, they never raised a peep against GMA lying to the people with her "I will not run" speech, they never raised a peep against GMA using taxpayers' money to campaign. All of these should have been enough to mobilize bands drawing multitudes to oppose the deliberate, solidarity with the Bush countries, concern for the poor, temperance, honesty, decency, respect for life, peace.

And now Cielo NGO is coming a peep about the peacekeeping of Filipino troops home in the ill-given Peace Bonds, which were in fact the let the time bound it to a pass of election. That is betrayal!

Wishy-washy

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE TRILATERAL agreement between Sen. Manuel Villar and President Fidel Ramos to run for the presidency and vice presidency in the May 2004 elections was a political marriage of convenience that fell apart when Villar refused to honor the agreement. Ramos had agreed to support Villar's presidential candidacy in exchange for Villar's support for Ramos' vice presidential candidacy. Villar's refusal to honor the agreement left Ramos without a presidential candidate to support.

Ramos' decision to support Villar's presidential candidacy was a reversal of his earlier decision to support Sen. Panfilo Lacson's presidential candidacy. Ramos' decision to support Villar was made after Lacson refused to withdraw his candidacy in favor of Villar. Lacson's refusal to withdraw his candidacy was based on his belief that he had a better chance of winning the presidency than Villar.

Ramos' decision to support Villar was also made after he had failed to persuade Lacson to withdraw his candidacy in favor of Villar. Ramos had argued that Villar had a better chance of winning the presidency than Lacson. Ramos had also argued that Villar had a better chance of winning the presidency than Lacson because Villar had the support of the Lakas-NUCD-UMDP party, which was the party of Ramos' former vice president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Ramos' decision to support Villar was also made after he had failed to persuade Lacson to withdraw his candidacy in favor of Villar. Ramos had

Reforms needed to render RP land market functional

THE PHILIPPINE'S economic malaise is mainly because its home in fact ranks of economic advisers is a welcome development, especially for us in the basic sectors. Dr. Sen's principle has greatly influenced the highly successful land titling programs in Peru and Thailand, which the Philippines will do well to consider as possible models.

In the Philippines, a recent land market study estimates that the economic loss as a result of a dysfunctional land market could reach as much as P1.5 trillion by 2010, unless the necessary land administration reforms are not set up. The findings reveal that 60 percent of the property market in the country remains informal. These worldclass lords (are of urban De Soto calls "dead capital," or the real estate and related properties that the poor own, but are not covered by legal titles. Its further detailed this issue as "like having houses but not titles: crops but not deeds; businesses, but no means of incorporation."

The current land administration and management system in the country does not adequately provide the conditions for a functioning land market and secure land tenure. Fundamental defects include the presence of two land titling processes, multiple forms of ownership rights in land and land valuation methods, and duplication and overlap of functions of lowland administration agencies.

We can see the experience of Thailand and Peru in putting in place land administration and management reforms in the country. This is strongly in line with the Arroyo administration's goals of promoting productivity by developing or form a million hectares of agri-business land.

The Task Force Land Administration Reform Reform Act (TF-LARA), a coalition composed of representatives from the seven major sectors of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, has been working closely with the Land Administration and Management Project (LAMP) in pushing for key policy and institutional reforms in this area. As the head of these reforms is the proposed Land Administration Reform Act which seeks to merge the functions and roles of the six land administration agencies into a single agency, the Land Administration Authority or LAA. The creation of the LAA is the first step that will pave the way for key reforms in the sector and will support related reforms in asset distribution and registration.

Through the LAMA advocacy we hope to work with the government in realizing its commitment to empower and make lives better for the poor.

—RICO DONDOG
national coordinator,
Task Force Land Administration Reform Act,
National Anti-Poverty Commission, & PAMCARRD, 1110 Edsa, Project 7, QC

Back to the basics

EDGE to your editorial, "Curriculum" (STR, 5/30/04).

Your editorial hit the nail on the head when it suggested that it is time to go "back to the basics" and do away with "non-essentials that have cropped up our school system."

In my humble opinion, based on my experience as Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS) district supervisor for almost 20 years, the following are what primarily ails our school system:

1. The frequent changes of educational goals and policies that always follow a change of leadership in the school system.

2. Politicization of the school system (DepEd).

3. The passing non-reading activities that are performed by teachers and school administrators.

4. Too many subject matters lumped under one major core subject.

5. Commercialization of the school system.

6. Lack of emphasis on moral values in the different learning areas.

7. Deficient solutions to the problems of the school system.

8. Intervention of parents/lovers and social attachments in the recruitment and promotion of teachers.

9. Employment of half-baked teachers, especially those produced by fly-by-night and diploma mill educational institutions.

10. Non-mastery of the basics considered in the minimum learning competencies prescribed for each subject area.

11. Lack of facilities and equipment like classrooms, desks, etc.

Besides those proposed by your editorial, I suggest the following:

1. Get rid of politics in the school system.

2. Changes of educational goals and policies should be done every 10 years if need be, after proper and thorough assessment and evaluation.

3. Discard the non-teaching activities of teachers and school administrators, and let these be handled properly by other government agencies.

4. Integrate or integrate moral values in the different subject areas.

5. There should be thorough and strict screening of students based solely on their qualifications to study.

6. Let us go back to the basics of teaching the "3 Rs" and science and technology.

7. Let us not commercialize our school system by getting rid of "egress" and by computerizing business transactions for more efficiency.

8. The Commission on Higher Education should be more effective educational institutions offering worthwhile courses.

9. There should be a policy limiting the enrollments in courses to at least 70 percent to 75 percent of the minimum requirements prescribed for each grade/year level.

10. Provision of enough teachers, classrooms, chairs, etc.

—EDUARDO A. SALTERIO,
municipal consultant,
Municipality of Pasacamba,
Province of Surigao del Sur

Garcillano exaggerates

TIME it is reacting to the newsworthy. "No Reward, says Garcillano" (STR, 5/5/04) which quoted Commissioner on Elections Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano as saying that I "violated Anti-Electoral Act during the election" (personality 2001). This is incorrect and:

1. On record that I did go to their Comelec Regional Office (at Carcillano's house in Cagayan de Oro City since, not because I wanted to interfere with or hinder, but because my wife, a fellow lawyer and lawyer, was insistent that she was all in there. I can no longer remember the exact date of this meeting, which could have happened in late 2000 or early 2001. I then advised that at that time I already had plans to run for an elective post in Cagayan de Oro City that I believed that Garcillano, who was already aspiring during that time to be appointed Comelec commissioner, wanted to meet with me (in order to make peace with my father?) more than I wanted to meet with him.

The second time I talked to Garcillano was when I saw him at the old Manila Domestic Airport while waiting for the flight to Cagayan de Oro City. Again, I cannot remember the exact date of this chance encounter. I remember that we talked about election lawpractice and Supreme Court decisions regarding the election laws.

I do not know why Garcillano is now (politely) narrating our "frequent" meetings (twice only and three certainly not "frequent"). If he thinks he can use those two encounters as a way to soften the opposition of my father, first, Sonia Pimentel, to his appointment as Comelec commissioner, he's severely mistaken.

I have nothing against Garcillano. If I see him again at the airport I will still talk to him. But Senator Pimentel, whose political career spans almost 40 years and who suffered a bit under martial law (when Garcillano "made" his name as an election official), certainly knows what Garcillano is capable of.

Were the act-nations of Garcillano in the last elections (e.g. filing a pleading with the Supreme Court without being asked to and taking a position which Justice Wendell Macapagal Arroyo intervene), I agree with Senator Pimentel that Garcillano's appointment as Comelec commissioner must not be confirmed. It should not have been made in the first place.

—ADOLFO "BOBO" PIMENTEL JR.
Suite 8, 6/F
Cacho-Gonzalez Bldg.,
101 Aguirre St., Legaspi Village, Makati City

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All sorts of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter without such information is supplied.

Saving public funds on road signs

I FULLY agree with the San Jose D'Agusan editorial calling for economy in government. It mentioned instances where the government can save a lot of money—specifically from the jobless unemployment allowance.

I would like to cite an example of government waste which can be minimized. I refer to the thousands of road signs all over the country, some of which are either unnecessary or excessive. About three kilometers from the position of Cotabato City going north is a hundred-meter curve with 14 road signs made of steel pipes. Interesting three meters long and three inches in diameter and mounted on cement footing.

If this irregularity is true in Cotabato, I wonder if it is also true in other parts of the country. What a cost this would!

—DR. JOSE D. DALISAY,
Clerk, Architecture Room,
Subang, Sasa, 2109 Davao

GMA has no one to repay but the people

THIS is in reaction to your editorial "Unappointment" (PDI, 7/7/04), which criticized the "practice of patronage and accommodation" in the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Surely one needs not look very far to find controversies regarding presidential appointments are troubling President Arroyo.

I am fully aware that it is the prerogative of the President to choose the members of the Cabinet. So, she's right on the President, she serves at her pleasure and may be replaced when she deems it necessary. However, public interest should be the primary consideration in choosing Cabinet members, not, as Garcillano Jnr. Secretary Leonardo "Dodoy" Jolibee, would put it, "political considerations" or political accommodation.

President Arroyo received a clear mandate in the last elections. As such, she doesn't need to pay any political debt. She only owes the people their votes and confidence, and they're the ones who should be "repaid" by the President.

She could do so by choosing members of her Cabinet who could really deliver the 10-point agenda she laid down in her inaugural address. She needs people who have the experience and skills to run technical departments such as the Department of Finance, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Transportation and Communications, and Department of Public Works and Highways.

The backbone of her 10-point program is infrastructure. The department responsible for this should be run by a technocrat who could deliver quantifiable accomplishments, not just empty promises.

The changes being undertaken by the DENR right now should be mentioned. The transparency in its operations and the efficiency in the implementation of its projects enabled the department to increase the cooperation of the private concessionaires doing business with the government

ENTERTAINMENT
Editor Lewis C. Carreon

Lav Diaz's 10-hour opus replaced by 5-hour 'Westside'

FILMMAKER Lav Diaz's latest movie, the 10-hour "Hesukristo ng Isang Pandiyang Filipino," will not be shown on the closing film of the 2004 Makati Cinemalaya International Film Festival due to technical difficulties.

Another Diaz masterpiece, the award-winning "Batang Westside," will be shown on Sunday at 6 p.m. at Greenbelt 1.

Cinemalaya festival director Tikoy Aguiluz said Diaz failed to finish his film because his computer crashed.

"What he was able to provide us was a VHS copy of the film, but we didn't want to show that," Aguiluz told Inquirer Entertainment yesterday. "But we're hoping that he could still solve the problem within this week."

He added that the movie is now 10 hours long.

The five-hour "Batang Westside" won awards in several international film festivals in 2002, it bagged 11 awards from the Metropolitan Filmfest Association in Philippines, including best picture, actor and director.

The Kinatok Film Festival and Singapore Film Festival had the movie as best picture in 2002 and Joel Torre and Tad Iowa as best actors.

It also won the Segpac award in the 2003 Hubert Bals Rotterdam Film Festival, as well as many awards for Torre and Iowa.

Variety Magazine praised a review of the movie and tagged it as a "Filipino masterpiece."

The Film Comment Magazine, a noted European film publication, voted the movie as one of the 10 best independent movies last year.

"Batang Westside" also wins Piyanlibs, Inc. and Dioisa Diaz. The latter won many of the best supporting actress trophies from local award-giving bodies. The movie was produced by Jury Evangelista under JAHN Production with Tony Mikoko as executive producer.

Instead of "Hesukristo," to be shown at the festival's closing film in the controversial documentary "Iimbitu" on Sunday, July 18, 8 p.m. at Greenbelt 3 of Ayala Center, he'll be in Makati City.

Former First Lady Imelda Marcos last week withdrew her opposition to the public screening of the award-winning documentary on her life. She had earlier asked the court to stop the showing of the film, claiming she did not know anything about it and did not give her consent for its screening.

"Iimbitu" premiered in January at the Sundance Film festival in Utah. It won for its direction, best documentary cinematography.

Sundance prize for "We're fighting to get it," Aguiluz had said of "Iimbitu" as an earlier interview. "Filipinos deserve to watch it."

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 2004

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Across the NATION

[illegible]

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

[illegible]

US troops to use airport at GenSan

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. has confirmed reports that members of the United States Armed Forces participating in the joint RP-US military exercises will use the city's international airport as entry point.

Acharon told reporters here that the national government had already asked his approval to use the airport.

"The national government called me up and informed me that US troops participating in Balikatan exercises in Cotabato in North Cotabato will be using our international airport. We are glad because it means more revenues for the city," the mayor said.

He said no other airport in Central Mindanao region could accommodate the aircraft and military equipment that would be brought in by the visiting US troops.

Tentoil as the second biggest airport in the country, the city's international airport can easily handle wide-bodied passenger jets and military aircraft.

The construction of the airport was undertaken under a $66.6 million project jointly financed by the Philippine government and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The mayor was hoping that the conduct of Balikatan exercises in Central Mindanao will not only open participating members of the Philippine armed forces with knowledge on counter-terrorism, but will also help spur the local economy.

"We expect the US troops to make our city their rest and recreation area. They are very much welcome here," Acharon said.

US troops, the mayor added, will also engage in social work here by conducting disaster preparedness training among officials of two identified calamity-prone villages of Calumpang and Batomelong.

The war on terror has driven authorities to the edge, busting suspects and studying motives.

In Davao City, soldiers seized arsenic explosives and ammunition from a barangay chair, his daughter and a barangay official who were allegedly members of the New People's Army (NPA).

In Zamboanga City, police in fatigues said they recovered Thursday a powerful bomb planted by the Abu Sayyaf group in a mosque area in Barangay Mampang.

Lt. Col. Erick Acayna, commander of the 103rd Infantry Brigade, said the three suspected NPA rebels were captured Tuesday night in a checkpoint while riding a motorcycle in Barangay Dacudao, Imbak, Paquibato District here.

Narcayan identified the alleged rebels as Andres Hernaez, 49, barangay chair of Lumlad, Paquibato District; his daughter Alry, 24; and barangay treasurer Ronnie Balagtas, 26. Agustin Zarate, Barbara Alibata and Adria Alipalo, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ROUNDUP

3 killed in Laguna

LAGUNA CITY—Unidentified suspects murdered three family members in Barangay Lingan, Magsaysay, Laguna on Sunday. The victims, Nonoy Pabico, 69, his common-law wife Maria Estabillo, 62, and her son Elmo, 31, were sleeping when unidentified men armed with knives broke into the victims' hut at around 4 a.m., police said. The suspects bolted the hut while Pabico was inside. Estabillo and her son were tied and gasoline poured on their clothes before being [illegible] Authorities said the only thing missing was a .22 caliber pistol.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Marijuana farm raided

LUBAO CITY—Police and Army men raided a marijuana plantation in Sitio Pili, Barangay San Isidrong Cita, Aliaga on Friday. They uprooted eight marijuana plants in the lot owned by a certain Mariano Cruz in the presence of village council officials. At about 11 a.m., the same day, the same raiding team found another plantation in Sitio Kawitan in the same village and burned by non-Texas Modelo. The authorities brought the evidence to the Aliaga police office for laboratory tests and custody. Charges of violation of the anti-drugs law are being prepared against the plantation owners.

Michael Lim Ico, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Escapee yields

BACOLOD CITY—Bongo fan and an escapee to surrender on Saturday to the police in Talisay, Negros Occidental. The escapee, Ronald Abot, a resident of Talisay, was brought to the police by town councilor Jonathan Valencia. Town police chief Senior Insp. Darius Maravillana said Abot was hiding in a cane field for over a week and he surfaced on Friday and went home because he could no longer endure his hunger. Abot's father brought the escapee to Valencia. Abot, who is facing rape charges, and five others bolted the Talisay police jail on July 1 by taking advantage of the absence of police [illegible] were reportedly carrying the town's fiesta centerpiece. The others are still at large.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Thieves in cop station

BACOLOD CITY—[illegible] Thieves [illegible] of the police station [illegible] EPO1 Ricardo Calendar, head of the [illegible] and homicide [illegible] while Retired Police Provincial [illegible] confirmed that when he found that the [illegible] P4,000 [illegible] emergency fund was missing and tattooed stolen by a policeman Tuesday. Next a blotter report stating that PO2 Joshua Pitbull, chief of Precinct 7, discovered at about 1 a.m. Saturday that the evidence cabinet had been opened and that P4,000 in cash was missing. Other policemen believe the money was taken by one of their colleagues but they refused to identify him.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Pushers found dead

BALIWAG CITY—Two suspected members of a drug pushing syndicate operating in Pilar were found dead in a grassy lot at Sitio Montillora in Barangay Tagaytay on Sunday. Police said Bonifacio Mariano Jr. and Reynaldo Bulac Jr. both of Barangay Pantao in Pilar were abducted by two unidentified men and taken to Sitio Montilla where they were shot and killed. Residents told police they heard successive bursts of gunfire shortly before midnight on Saturday. The victims' bodies bore bullet wounds from a .45 cal. pistol.

Benjo Rafinesque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Medicinal plant research

BAGUIO, Benguet—The United States National Institute of Health and the University of the Philippines College of Medicine have ventured into a $200,000 research work on cordyceps and holothurians to discover and promote local medicinal plants. Lourdes Cruz of the UP Marine Science Institute said they conducted a conference workshop on conservation and biodiversity among local officials, members of non-governmental organizations and environmentalists. Cruz said they might choose Sitio Banawen, a mountainous village here, as site to identify local medicinal plants. But residents feared the possibility of doing the documentation work only to find a new project to always hampered by [illegible]

Benjo Rafinesque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Bulacan judge stops mayor from assuming post

BOCAUE, Bulacan—A judge here has ordered newly elected Mayor Reuben Ole la Cruz to stop assuming his post until July 26 following an election protest filed against him by the son of Sangguniang Pilipinas presidential candidate Eduardo "Bro. Eddie" Villanueva.

Judge Wilfredo Nieves of the Bulacan regional trial court in the City of Malolos issued on June 29 a temporary restraining order (TRO) against De la Cruz who won in the May 10 elections.

The TRO was issued after Reuben Mayor Edsar de Villanueva in an election protest case filed against him by the late Mayor Jose Santiago.

He was a barangay consultant before becoming a councilor during the administrations of former President Corazon Aquino following the 1986 Edsa Revolution.

In 1989, he ran and won as vice-mayor of Bocaue. He became mayor in 1992.

"Like a true soldier, I will abide by the rules of law. But I will consider my next move depending on the final court decision," he told the lawyers.

De la Cruz sought a two-day refuge inside the parish church of Bocaue after receiving death threats. He said he and his family members had slept for two nights in the church after refusing the mass oath-taking of Bulacan officials in the Bocaueño Church in Malolos on June 28.

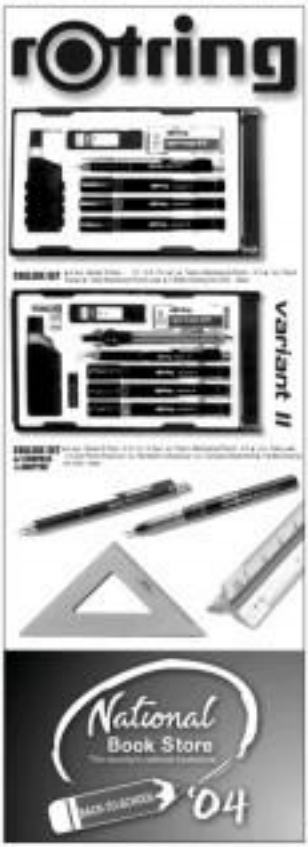
Chief Insp. Lolosio Cumbe, acting Bocaue police chief, said the la Cruz's close friends reportedly saw a group of armed men visiting the house/hotel.

Fr. Jose Sebastian, Bocaue's parish priest, said he allowed De la Cruz and his family members, including his supporters, to stay in the church for two nights.

Sebastian said the mayor also underwent a spiritual retreat.

But the younger Villanueva, a member of the Jesus Is Lord Christian group, described as "a greenhorn" De la Cruz's stay in the church. Villanueva said he and his family do not use violence to win.

Gov. Josefina de la Cruz declared her full support to the mayor, saying he was elected through "legitimate and legal means because he was not of lycha people." Gerinale Reyes, PIR Central Luzon Desk



INQUIRER Northern Luzon
Editor Joel Barredo-ed
Assoc. Ched Redondo B. Fortaleza

Not really a home for these kids

By Yolanda Benito-Fuentes
Lingayen, Pangasinan

THREE children, including a 7-month-old baby, play in their father's wooden bed canopied by plastic sacks while their 6-year-old brother goes to school.

At another room lies a double-decker bed covered by plastic sacks seen together where three other children also live with their parents.

This is not a disastrous, but a provincial jail that the children call "home." Their parents are inmates waiting for the court to decide on the cases against them.

Prefecto Manuel Jr., 31, said his wife brought their four children to jail so she could earn money washing the clothes of the family of his lawyer.

He said his wife fetched the children every afternoon, but on certain nights, the couple had to spend with him in his cramped bed.

Manuel, who is facing a child abuse charge, has been in prison since February 2002.

He said the girl, who accused him of abusing her and her cousin, had already signed an affidavit of desistance, but the judge handling the case did not believe in settlements. The judge ordered early this year and the case was transferred to another court.

When this reporter entered the jail last month, a smiling Manuel and his wife had just left him, leaving the children with his parents.

Life in prison

Manuel, however, is confident that nothing would happen to his children inside the jail because, he said, the prisoners were their guardians and even helped him take care of them.

"Some prisoners coax their children so they were more like their own, giving them food which their family members bring. They also give them money once, which they use to buy candies," he said in Pangasinan.

However, Manuel said he worries so his children out of his sight. "The floor is always dirty," he said.

In another corner of the cell sleeps the family of Pedro Barbosa, 45, who is accused of rape. His wife and three boys, aged 7, 8 and 9,—live with him in a rusty-checked plywood bed.

Barbosa said a former inmate housed his family in a bit near the fishpond he was leasing. But when the lease expired in May his family had no place to go so they came to live with him in jail.

The three boys attend school nearby. Sometimes, other prisoners ask them to run errands for them.

Barbosa's wife, on the other hand, does the marketing for the prisoners, who cook their own food.

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Lino is a preschool student in a nearby private school and he too, goes in and out of the jail during school days. He is luckier than the other "jail kids" because his grandparents, who live in the Dagupel Estate, have adopted him.

"He is wanting for the petticoat pajama and will be taken to the US by my parents soon," Concepcion said.

Concepcion, who is separated from his wife, said his son used to stay with his late ex-partner. But when his parents entered Lino in April, they decided that it was better if he lived with his father.

The former murder, Feliciano Dela, allowed the three inmates to live with their families behind bars.

Humanitarian

Perhaps, it was a humanitarian move on the part of Dela, who was dismissed recently because of alleged illegal drug activities inside the prison facility.

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Jail guards confiscated from the prisoners several improvised weapons, and the children could get their 6 months cropped inside the jail.

"It's just not proper to have children inside the jail," provincial legal officer Geraldine Bautista said.

Said Bautista, officer in charge of the provincial social welfare and development office, said young children should never live inside prisons as it would have a short and long term effect on their emotional development.

"The environment is just too dangerous for them. Besides many terrorist inmates. Besides, children need to feel free to play outside and not be confined behind bars," he said.

"Imagine after their classes, they'll look at grills. The effects on their minds and emotions could be long-lasting," he said.

Culture bearers from north and south

By Philsquest Perez
Contributor

ART BRINGS together in one space or object, the concrete and the lasting, the abstract and the ephemeral, the remembered ones and those that remember.

Last week at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, art lovers, culture seekers, the curious and the curious experienced a joining of culture-bearer art works from the north and the south.

The CCP unveiled the late Roberto Villanueva's giant mural from the 1977 Baguio Arts Festival as a permanent exhibit, and Fely Angel's "Art Tungtu: The Ritual of Daily Living."

The two artists hail from Baguio City and Bontoc in Mountain and each brought together on this day exactly by coincidence. However, they are also brought together from north and south through the work of Baguio native Jose and artist Fe Barcelo de Guia.

Villanueva died in Baguio in his early 50s as well as an entertainer.

Villanueva and Angel are among the artists featured in the book, which will be launched here this week.

Villanueva was an artist who loved people and life. In his lifetime, he shared the experience of his art by forging his creations in spaces where people could walk through, touch, smell and interact with his installations.

He built his art from unconventional materials, such as tires, beds, or simple things such as more than 100 rosaries' handkerchiefs.

Seen in his paintings, Villanueva was playing with space. For an angle, in a map that he painted of Southeast Asia and the surrounding waters, he reshaped Baguio into a globe, covered in pine cones. On the giant canvas that was unveiled at CCP last week, he expressed the different arts in one overwhelming spread.

Recreating space

Angel, on the other hand, makes his residence in Bontoc. He also has his own unique way of recreating space.

His new six-panel hung paintings on a wall, Angel approaches all pieces as though they were simply "accessories" in a space with which one plays.

Thus, through his work, a whole space and everything outside it, many distant about where to place something and how it becomes a point of excitement and an object of art.

Even not satisfied with visual depth such as textures, bottle caps, old light bulbs or a broken circular bronze part of Bontoc's famous "Salt Tuba" and part of his "Ritual of Daily Living," are an extension which ought to resonate through his opening night.

More works of Angel, Villanueva and other culture-bearers from the north and the southern ethnic parts of the Philippines, are also be seen and experienced at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila until the end of the month.

"LEMON Arts," acrylic by Roberto Villanueva

The guy with the bird's nest of a beard gets lucky

By Elizabeth Lukeg
Contributor

PHOTOGRAPHER Tommy Hafalla highly respects the custodials (Cordillera shamans). He does not take their rituals and utterances for granted. His cameras to them sometimes works as a protective shield.

One, on his way to Sagada, Kalinga, the jeep he was riding in screeched to a halt just inches away from a portion of a road where a landslide was in motion. Half of a rice terrace fell and buried the road with mud.

Climbing his backpack and camera bag, all of it weighing 18 kilos, Hafalla crossed on foot the thigh-high mudslide to get to the safe side 50 meters away.

While he was in the middle of the muck, the people who had successfully crossed immediately waved and shouted at him to hurry. A lot of rocks and stones began to roll down. He plodded on while huge rocks fell and splattered micro-mud on his clothes.

Graveyard downside landslider

Later, only a stone scraped his shin.

Manuel, who is facing a child abuse charge, has been in prison since February 2002.

He said the girl who accused him of abusing her and her cousin had already signed an affidavit of desistance, but the judge handling the case did not believe in settlements. The judge retired early this year and the case was transferred to another court.

When this reporter entered the jail last month, a smiling Manuel and his wife had just left him, leaving the children with his parents.

Life in prison

Manuel, however, is confident that nothing would happen to his children inside the jail because, he said, the prisoners were their guardians and even helped him take care of them.

"Some prisoners coax their children so they were more like their own, giving them food which their family members bring. They also give them money once, which they use to buy candies," he said in Pangasinan.

However, Manuel said he worries so his children out of his sight. "The floor is always dirty," he said.

In another corner of the cell sleeps the family of Pedro Barbosa, 45, who is accused of rape. His wife and three boys, aged 7, 8 and 9,—live with him in a rusty-checked plywood bed.

Barbosa said a former inmate housed his family in a bit near the fishpond he was leasing. But when the lease expired in May his family had no place to go so they came to live with him in jail.

The three boys attend school nearby. Sometimes, other prisoners ask them to run errands for them.

Barbosa's wife, on the other hand, does the marketing for the prisoners, who cook their own food.

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LAURY Silvestre, an elder of Dap-ay Tabljan in Bagabag, Mt. Province

Another time, he closely watched a mumbaki (daughter's chicken for the omen among ritual cut. Its intestines (also in Bagabag City commemorating the election of the July 16, 1990 earthquake.

Winner

While the rest of the crowd stood on the opposite side of the line, Hafalla followed to the bale, who plucked a chicken feather and told him to keep it. Then the bale mentioned that Hafalla would win something soon.

Later, he worked in his darkroom with the radio on. There was a quiz on what area the latest musician Lea Salonga sang a song starring in New York. Hafalla e-mailed his answer, "Flower Drum Song."

Later, he heard his name called as a semifinalist. In Manila, the bale was hardly surprised when he heard he emerged the winner of a grand cup ticket in New York with free hotel accommodations to watch the Salonga musical.

"Then he remembered the bale's words.

While he was in Los Angeles, California, he brought his portfolio of photographs to the Cordillera to the Pre-chekhobile Cafe near the American Film Institute, hoping for an exhibit there.

Leica swap

While showing his photos to his friends and other people, an old man named Norby approached Hafalla and said, "Those are great photos. I have a Leica camera that I personally haven't used. Would you like me to swap it for 10 of your photos?"

Hafalla, some days later, gave the guidebook gift as an opportunity. He couldn't afford this camera by "body alone costs $1,000." I could only own it in my dreams. Then here it comes," he said.

The first time he saw it in person he skipped point. Apart from this, his other equipment are a 1966 model of a Nikon F and a 1971 Nikon FS.

Black and white

For his current show, he will works with a passion in black and white.

"Parang binibini [It's as though you're consuming of. I like working with my hands, not just my eyes. If you take photos, there is no element of surprise as you pre-visualize and post-visualize. You don't know what will come out in the darkroom whereas with digital photography, it's like spoon-feeding. Where's the passion there? It's instant gratification, dreams can die."

He works with issues that he writes through manifestations and the use of photography to make the works aesthetically pleasing and also to share well last longer.

Although a resident of Baguio, he spends a lot of time in Sagada for its "unique and very much alive" culture. "Although I was born in Bontoc, the entire weather as Baguio. He views at home in Sagada. It's a personal point. From there I am really got to Kalinga or Bagyo."

His adoptive family, the Gallegos of Dagdag, have urged him to get his residence certificate there and register as a voter in Sagada.

The people normally called him Dhonato to mean his bird's nest of a beard. But now, he has been given the fraternity name Kage, after the last name who founded the dap-ay shelter where Hafalla is set as a member.

Lukay's portrait

Among the striking images he brought to Baguio for his show "Sagada of Tradition" is his portrait of Lukay Bangsoy of Sagada. He is wearing a headdress of rose of feathers called *kayayad* and a huge necklace made up of bear's teeth and a single crocodile tooth.

The occasion was a dangay, wherein all the community's elders called home or they could stay within the boundaries of the town to ward off misfortune or, in the old days, to defend themselves from headhunting enemies.

Although headhunting has stopped, Hafalla said that based on the stories of historian William Henry Scott, the prayers and invocations of native remained the same.

Lukay makes a basket to present a copy of his 16" x 20" photo as the subjects of his portraits.

An appreciative Lukay told him, "I look so good here. I don't think Fray created President Joseph Estrada's presence a picture as good as this one."

The portraits of his Ifugao of Luzon in Bagiuio, Bontoc, showed his in the art of rendering likeness on a small type. This models of smoke wall near her head. "Tobacco a precious to the people of the highlands," Hafalla said.

Ninety-two years old when the picture was taken, Lisa told him, "I want my image preserved so that my grandchildren can say, 'Ah, that is our grandmother.'"

Hafalla's eight photos are all mounted frames of wood and old wood especially designed and made for him by sculptor Jerusalem Sacan. The photos represent some of the Cordillera provinces: Benguet, Ifi, Province, Ifugao and Kalinga.

Hafalla's 34th solo exhibition opens on July 15 and runs until Aug. 15 at the Nikki Gallery, Nikki Hotel in Baguio. Besides exhibitions in Baguio, Simultaneous with the show is the group exhibit of black and white photos "Tabi Tabi Po," featuring Ingrid Bengco, Kaye Rosario, Genevieve Asunjan, Ana Abad, Candy Gourlay, Jessica Hafalla and Melody Sherman.

VIGIL
Two cousins of hostage Angelo de la Cruz keep vigil in the village of Buenavista in Mexico, Pampanga as among the measures with prayers for De la Cruz's safe release from his captors in Iraq.

Dengue sweeps S. Mindanao, kills 44, mostly children

DAVAO CITY—Forty-four people, most of them children, died of dengue in the Southern Mindanao region since January. Dr. Salvador Estores, acting regional health director, said.

Estores made this revelation as the mosquito-borne disease emerges across the region and neighboring areas.

But the health official said despite the increasing number of dengue cases, there was still no need to declare a dengue outbreak.

For this city alone, 794 persons since January had been hospitalized after contracting the deadly dengue virus according to the DOH-Regional Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit (Ress).

The data did not include the 195 cases registered at the Davao Medical Center from June 20 to July 10 this year.

Dr. Rogelio Ponce, Druh Ress 11 head, said that Tagum District registered the highest number of dengue cases—with 2,06 persons.

Ponce said even in 2003, Tagum had the highest number of dengue cases at 214 persons.

Estores said dengue usually peaks from May to the rainy season.

He said it was important to maintain close surveillance as that dengue-carrying mosquitoes are devoid of breeding areas.

In Cotabato City, the city health office there said that fogging could only do so much against dengue-carrying mosquitoes.

Dr. Abdullah Usmanna, city health officer, said fogging only kills adult mosquitoes and not the eggs.

Like Estores, Usmanna also urged residents to clean up after a notable increase in dengue cases in the city during the past days.

He said since the start of the year, there have already recorded 10 confirmed cases of dengue with at least four deaths.

In Iligan City alone, 195 children have been cuddled to the Iligan Medical Center (IMC) alone for the past 38 days because of the deadly mosquito-borne disease.

The biggest number of admissions at the IMC for a 48-hour period occurred on Saturday and Sunday last week with 46 children treated.

Dengue is characterized by intensely high fever that does not subside even after the patient takes paracetamol.

Some victims also show symptoms of internal bleeding and organ failure.

Susanne Natividad, DMC research officer, said that unique illness in Tubig Dacot pushed the highest number of patients with 17 children admitted for treatment.

The City Health Office said it has intensified its education campaign for a city-wide cleanup drive.

The DHO said dengue-carrying mosquitoes should be cleared of breeding places.

In Cotabato City authorities said at least four children had died of dengue since January. Authorities Allan and Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao bureau

Country club union rejects wage package

BAGUIO CITY—Employees of the Baguio Country Club have rejected a new pay scale offered by Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas in June to resolve a three-month old strike threat in one of the country's oldest recreation facilities.

The Baguio Country Club Employees League (BCCEL) voted to strike on March 4, prompting the club to lose its turfday with barbed wire to contain any unrest.

Thomas eventually ordered three of its five farmwork over the mediation.

But the union refused the Tomas' package that would increase the rank and file's average base pay of P6,500 by only P650.

The union also questioned before the Supreme Court the secretary's jurisdiction over the country club negotiations, and Bienvenido Picarsio, Cordillera director of the national conciliation and mediation board (NCMB).

"The pay increase (the labor department) has offered to actually only P260 higher than what the management is offering us. We wanted an additional across-the-board pay scale of P1,000. Management wanted to give us only P650," said Alfredo Andrada, BCCEL president.

The union's High Court decision has puzzled the club management, said Anthony de Leon, club manager. "They did not question (Sto. Tomas) on her when she first assumed jurisdiction over the consultations. But now that a decision is issued, they question (the secretary's) motives," he said.

Andrada declined to respond in public, saying the issues had been presented at the tribunal. Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Appeals court reduces school exec's penalty

By Nuray G. Azucena
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—The Court of Appeals has reduced to six months suspension the penalty of a school division superintendent here who was earlier dismissed from the service on charges of corruption in the purchase of flip charts using the pork barrel funds of congressmen and a senator.

The CA reduced the penalty meted on Marcelo Gapasin, former Negros Oriental schools division superintendent, after noting that the Commission on Audit did not find anything irregular in the buy transactions involving the purchase of the flip charts.

The CA said while Gapasin had administrative liability and was the head public of another penalty prejudicial to the best interest of the service, dismissing him from service was "too harsh."

"... The penalty of dismissal from the service appears too harsh for a public servant of 40 years without any record of malfeasance or misfeasance except the present one," the appellate court ruled.

The case stemmed from the purchase of more than 21,000 science, environmental protection and health flip charts in 1998, using some P17 million of the countrywide development fund (CDF) of then Negros Oriental second district Reps. Miguel Romero and Sen. Freddie Webb.

Each of the 12-page colored flip charts cost P800 and these were bought from the Phillite Trading and General Merchandise of New Manila, Quezon City in four occasions in March, May, September and October of 1998.

Romero and Webb were supposed by Gapasin to help in the anti-drug campaign in the school in the province.

The Philippine Commission Against Graft and Corruption (PCAGC), in its investigation, found that no bidding was conducted in all the purchases and that Gapasin had no authority to disburse funds above P100,000.

It said there was no consultative with school administrators of teachers to determine the need for the flip charts. In fact, the COA found that some 3,375 pieces of the flip charts, amounting to P1.6 million, "remained unused."

The PCAGC came into the picture in 2000 upon the request of then Education Secretary Andrew Gonzales. In recommending to dismiss Gapasin was favorably acted on by the Office of the President about two years ago, prompting the superintendent to bring his case to the Court of Appeals.

Soldiers kill 6 terror suspects in clashes

DARBOMOR CITY—Government soldiers killed at least six armed men during separate clashes here and in Sulu, military officials announced yesterday.

Army spokesperson Col. Buenaventura Pascual said at least three Moro islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels were killed when they tried to harass militiamen posted at a detachment in Weak Unarm here early morning Wednesday.

He said none of the militiamen, who are under the Army's 4th Infantry Battalion, was harmed during the gunfight.

In Sulu, three Abu Sayyaf gunmen were killed during a clash with Marines on Tuesday.

Brig. Gen. Nelson Allaga, commander of the 3rd Marine Brigade, said one of those slain was Amil Jikhmail, one of the leaders of a group of terrorists under Abu Sayyaf leader Radullan Sahiron.

Allaga said the Marines were conducting an operation in a remote village of Barikai town around 8:20 a.m. when they clashed upon 20 members of the terrorist group led by Jikmail.

He said the bodies of the slain terrorists have been recovered during clearing up operations.

Allaga said aside from the slain terrorists, the soldiers under Lt. Col. Sr. Pimentel, also recovered medicines, three M-16 rifles and assorted ammunition. Jaila Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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GMA keeps 'em guessing; no word from Palace

CAN you defend this at Plaza Miranda? Rallyers pressing for the release of the Filipino hostages in Iraq by pulling out the Filipino contingent there are nose-down, truncheoned and beaten up by police in the place that is considered the country's freedom park.

ment if the Philippines was advocating the pullout as demanded by the Iraqi militant kidnappers, or was sticking by its commitment to bring to 51 strong from Hunter on Aug. 20 as scheduled.

Administration officials refused to elaborate on the statement and it was not clear if the Iraqi militants holding De la Cruz would accept such an apparently deliberately vague declaration.

The government statement left unanswered the questions of when Malacañang would actually pull out the Filipino troops from Iraq.

Malacañang, which had imposed a news blackout on the hostage crisis, was not in any mood to talk.

Ms. Arroyo has not made a public statement on the hostage crisis for days and Palace officials, who normally were willing to talk to reporters, did not answer calls on their cell phones yesterday.

Violent dispersal

In high spirits the protests aroused by the De la Cruz hostage drama that snarlles broke out in Plaza Miranda between police and about 200 demonstrators demanding that the Filipino troops pull out from Iraq.

Police used water cannons and clubbed the protesters, including lawyer Carol Pagaduan-Araullo of Bayan Muna, and members of Bayan Muna, among others, were caught by television cameras bleeding profusely from an apparent head injury.

As the third deadline set by De la Cruz's captors for the government to agree to their demand ebbed near, Department of Foreign Affairs officials bagged off from talking about his predicament.

Ms. Arroyo herself has not said anything on the issue for days.

A put on the back

But even as she has left many Filipinos flabbergasted, Ms. Arroyo drew a pat on the back from one of the country's staunchest ally, the United States.

Apparently recognizing the fine line that Manila was taking to obtain De la Cruz's release while remaining one of Washington's closest supporters, US Secretary of State Colin Powell called Mr. Arroyo, The Associated Press said.

"Mr. applaud President Arroyo's decision not to give in to terrorists and not to agree to an early withdrawal of Filipino forces," state department spokesperson Richard Boucher said.

Australia baffled

As the Philippines scrambled to ensure the release of De la Cruz, another staunch US ally, Australia, urged nations not to cave in to terrorists.

But even Australia appeared baffled by the Arroyo administration's "as soon as possible" pledge to withdraw its troops.

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said he had been unable to get confirmation from Manila on what exactly the statement meant.

But he said he told the Philippine government that South Korea had been right not to bend to the demands of militants who executed South Korean hostage Kim Sun-il.

"The South Koreans did the world a favor by saying that they wouldn't be bullied by terrorists," Downer told reporters. "And if countries cave in to terrorists' demands, then that only encourages the terrorists to become more reckless and more aggressive around other countries as well as that country itself."

The retaliation may have been deliberate at Mr. Arroyo sought to maintain her open support of the US-led war on terrorism while avoiding a possible domestic backlash if De la Cruz was beheaded, the AP said.

Touching the heart

Segista spelled out the government's latest position on the crisis, in a statement to a Filipino reporter in Baghdad, Iraq.

"The Philippine government, consistent with its commitment, will withdraw its Philippine humanitarian contingent from Iraq as soon as preparations for their return to the Philippines are completed," he said.

However, when Al Jazeera aired the statement, Segista was quoted as saying the withdrawal would be made "as soon as possible."

CNN quoted unidentified Philippine officials as saying Gloria expected De la Cruz to be released on Tuesday.

Segista's appearance on Arabic television came after the militant group, Iraqi Islamic Army-Khaldiyah Al-Fallujah Corps, issued a statement that suddenly advanced deadline for the Philippines to act on its demand for Filipino forces to withdraw from Iraq.

Foreign Secretary Delia Albert issued a single-sentence statement at around 5 p.m. which did not provide any details about the crisis.

Full authority

"When Deputy Foreign Minister Rafael Seguia spoke this morning during his interview with Al-Jazeera, he spoke with firsthand knowledge and full authority of the Philippine government," she said in a statement distributed by DFA spokesperson Lilibeth Araque.

Albert was referring to Seguia's statement over pan-Arabic television station in which he appealed for mercy to De la Cruz's captors and announced that the Philippine contingent would be pulled out "as soon as possible."

The Iraqi insurgents initially threatened to behead De la Cruz in 72 hours if the Philippines did not withdraw its forces in Iraq. Later they set two more deadlines for Manila to agree to pull out its 42 soldiers and eight policemen from Iraq by July 20.

Anaque's statement

Araque was badgered by reporters eager about having to wait several hours, only to be given a 26-word statement from Albert.

Reporters also fumed over learning that it was Araque who barred them from going up to the 11th and 12th floors of the DFA main building, where the offices of Albert and the other undersecretaries were usually located.

"I already have given the secretary's statement," was all Araque would tell reporters.

Officials at the DFA could also recall news blackout imposed by Malacañang covered the department itself, which was designated as the only official source of information on the hostage crisis.

Members of the DFA's crisis management team locked themselves up in a meeting all day and had yet to issue a statement as of 5 p.m.

Top department officials refused to speak to reporters or were inaccessible by phone.

Some late-morning DFA officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they thought that the options would no longer extend the third deadline they had given Manila.

De la Cruz alive

Reporters were able to get in touch by phone with a member of the diplomatic negotiation team in the Middle East at around 1 p.m. The diplomat said De la Cruz was still alive when Seguia made the appeal for the driver's life to be spared.

"We know he was alive because we were with the emissary [of De la Cruz's captors] at that time [when Seguia was airing his appeal]," the source said.

One of the last sources (DFA officials) to speak to reporters in an ambush interview was assistant Secretary for Middle Eastern and African Affairs Norberto Basilio and deputy public information service unit chief Raymund Tale, at around 3 p.m.

"Why, is there any announcement that he's dead? Unless there is, the presumption is that he's still alive. We'll let you know," Basilio said.

Horse's mouth

As far as the Roman Catholic Church was concerned, he it came from the horse's mouth.

Church and militant groups yesterday descended (that Ms Arroyo had sent things straight on the line of De la Cruz following conflicting reports on when or how soon Filipino troops would be pulled out of Iraq.

Karen Philippines, an organization of Catholic priests, urged the government to heed the appeal today and urged the De la Cruz's family by helping in important in the negotiations and pulling out the Philippines' humanitarian contingent.

"The President should not even think of whether or not to do this. She should respond by pulling out the troops, not just for respect de la Cruz but for all the OFWs in the Middle East," Fr. Joe Evans, board member of Kanlaon, said.

Even the military has clamored up.

An retired Forces spokesperson refused to answer any more questions on the pullout of the Philippine humanitarian contingent.

Ready for evacuation

But earlier yesterday, AFP Public Information Office chief Lt. col. Daniel Lucero stressed that the military was ready to evacuate the 43 soldiers and eight policemen from Iraq even on order for their pullout was given by their envoy.

"We are ready on order to leave, we are ready for withdrawal and gradual pullout," said Lucero. He did not elaborate.

"It would be better to direct your questions to the DFA on matters regarding Iraq," Lucero said.

Lt. Col. Bartolome Padilla, Philippine Air Force spokesperson, said the Air Force had a C-130 transport plane ready and waiting to fly the troops out of Iraq. PHOTO AND REPORT FROM Marche S. Rivera

Yellow ribbons . . .

Arab TV says De la Cruz taken to execution site

The video footage was a grim omen to a hostage saga that began early on Thursday last week when Al-Jazeera first showed De la Cruz in a video in the hands of Iraqi militants who threatened to behead him and four others in 72 hours if Manila did not yield to their demands.

The saga took a bizarre turn last Saturday when Labor Secretary Patria Sto. Tomas tearfully announced that De la Cruz had been freed.

New deadline

Seguia' statement followed a new deadline for De la Cruz's execution unless the Arroyo administration agreed to pull out its troops by July 20.

At De la Cruz's home in Pangasinan, relatives were unwilling to talk, having had their hopes raised and shattered before.

They prayed and lit candles with friends, hoping against hope.

"We are already confused and don't know any wrong information like last Saturday," said Beth Reyes, a sister of De la Cruz. (See story on Page A1.)

Test of wills

The latest statement by the Iraqi militants stressed that they were in the final stages of preparing to kill De la Cruz, who was abducted on his driver's fault truck into Iraq from Saudi Arabia.

Hostage standoffs over the past two months have posed a major test of will for Iraq's new interim government, Washington and the allies with troops in the country.

De la Cruz's latest appearance on Arabic television came after the militant group holding him, the Iraqi Islamic Army-Khaldiyah Al-Fallujah Corps, issued a statement that suddenly advanced the deadline for Philippine action on the group's demands and gave the Arroyo administration only three hours to respond.

The deadline was the third since De la Cruz was snatched last week.

News blackout

De la Cruz's wife, Annaia, along with a brother, had been flown by the government to Jordan, near Iraq, to appeal for her husband's release.

Before yesterday's video was released, Annaia still appeared: "Let us not stop, let us not lose hope."

Pangasinan Rep. Oscar de la Cruz Jr., brother of the captive, woke up to the news that the latest deadline had lapsed.

"We don't know anything," he said, recognizing about a government-imposed news blackout on the issue negotiations with the kidnappers.

"We are asking our President release our brother is," he said.

"We are just losing the support. Until now that nobody answered our cries, threats, a diplomat at the Philippine Embassy in Amman.

"There is nothing new," he told agence France-Presse, adding that the government has been informed the relatives of De la Cruz should not meet the press at this time so as not to jeopardize efforts for his release.

Majority rules

Ms Arroyo earlier expressed belief that she apparently had a cooperative Congress—both in the House and Senate—to back up her 10-point economic, social and political agenda.

Dilion had a grand retort to quash all of Pimentel's protests. Quote, "This is a democracy. The majority will decide. This is democracy; majority rules. We are the majority," he said in a phone interview.

Villar, the senior businessman, had two words: "No comment."

to schools, the latest for the government to show the people's seriousness.

The practice alluded to an early 1970s bit song that urged a woman to tie a yellow ribbon around a tree in her front yard if she would still welcome her lover who was coming home after doing prison time. She tied a hundred ribbons.

Exhausted

Just now, the rarity of the upbeat ditty may be lost on De la Cruz's friends and relatives in Mexico, Pangasinan, typical yesterday they were "exhausted, angry and impatient."

But "still clinging to hope," barely added Hermogen Captain Alfredo Pineda of Bauang, Ilocos—where the family of the 48-year-old truck driver used to—and "one of eight boys—is a friend of de la Cruz's" is named the family's right for their behalf (governor must) entered its fifth night.

Pineda said many were, and many more started starting after 5 p.m. when reports reached them that De la Cruz had been moved by his captors to an execution site.

Rona de la Cruz, a sister-in-law of Angelo's, said she was "shocked" by the news.

Not only television footage that the Philippine Ambassador to Iraq Rafael Seguia giving assurances of the pullout of the Philippine humanitarian contingent "as soon as possible" failed to soothe nerves in the village, he added.

Remember in mind: up of 120 Filipinos in Iraq "were not born or prayer and are really very disturbed," Pineda told the reporters. It would help a lot, he pointed out, if they could get information straight from the Department of Foreign Affairs or Malacañang. Ms Arroyo, the Filipinos in Iraq, native cause from media, he said.

He lamented: "It's my responsibility to tell my constituents what's happening to Sony Dong [De la Cruz] but that obviously has changed down here. We can only take guidance in prayers."

"The waiting is already gnawing," De la Cruz's sister, Beth Reyes, said. "To be waiting is the dark is killing me."

Reyes appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo to lift the news blackout. She said Angelo's wife Arsenia had not called since leaving on Sunday for Jordan.

Skeptical

The jump-for Filipinos remained "skeptical" of Seguia' announcement of a pullout, said the group's Central Luzon spokesperson Raquel Rivera.

"We gave no specifics. So date, no time," she said. "We haven't heard a straight line from Ms Arroyo herself for any date she has commanded the troops to move out."

Bataan Mayor Teddy Tanseng said he would like to see the most recent video footages of De la Cruz still alive.

"What is shown on TV De l Bos. For Sonny Isn," Tanseng pointed out.

Connie Rodriguez, a teacher and a cousin of De la Cruz's, agreed, crying. "To see is to believe. What we have are just words, not facts."

Some 2,300 students of the Don Jesus Gonzales High School in the Pandacqui town/district where Joanna Angelo's fifth child, studies in white candles and offered prayers for his safety.

At least 30 of the school's teachers earlier went to the De la Cruz's house to pray the rosary.

General Lucero Police Chief Supt. Vidal Quezon also joined Pantaleños to assure the villagers that the government was doing its best to save De La Cruz. Quezon told the lawyers that he did this on his own, "to empathize."

Cover-up!

Also yesterday, militant groups combined to set another prayer rally and candle-lighting ceremony at the People's Park in Baguio City.

Ben Ashian, regional coordinator of Migrante, said they were calling on Malacañang to give the public the real score. "The news blackout is a cover-up to hide the negligence of the government," Ashian said.

Migrante led the prayer rally, which was participated in by the Cordillera Human Rights Organization (CHRO), Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Anakpawis Partylist, Gabriela Women's Party, Kilusang Mayo Uno and the University of Tampering Phra Ti Kappa (A Gathering for Heart). With a report from Rebecca Cohen, Hel Aurelyn Lozano Bueno

Coding for buses on Edsa

By Margaux C. Ortiz

WITH the worsening traffic on Edsa, an official of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) yesterday recommended that the number coding scheme for buses be removed on the main thoroughfare.

"There is no way to ease up the traffic situation on Edsa but to reduce the number of vehicles plying it," MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said.

Vergel de Dios said that with the scheme, 20 percent of the 1,000 buses that ply Edsa every day would be taken off the road.

President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the suspension of the number coding scheme for buses before the May elections.

Traffic schemes debated

The traffic chief said he set aside their supporting the traffic circumvention by 10 percent, the scheme will additional buses also defeat the purpose of the agency's traffic interventions, like special loading and unloading zones.

Vergel de Dios explained that the buses expose traffic jams by starting too long in a particular loading and unloading zone to pick up passengers.

"The more buses, the harder for the drivers and conductors to get passengers," Vergel de Dios said. "They would wait up longer by using these critical zones to wait."

He also said that most of the buses were only half-filled every during peak hours "because they started too many."

Single dispatch system

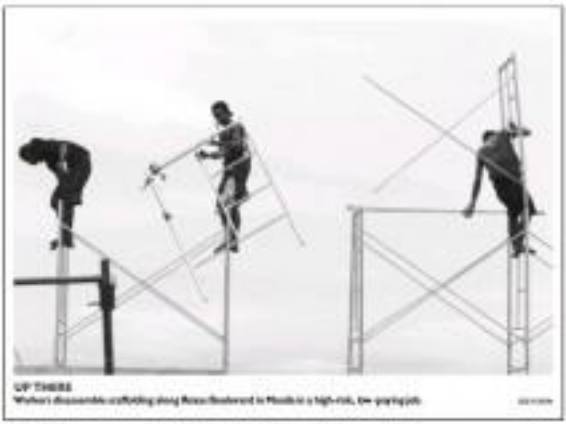
The traffic director said that the traffic situation on Edsa could also be improved if the number of bus terminals would be controlled through the MMDA's Organized Bus Route or single dispatch system.

With the OBR, the number of buses allowed to ply the main thoroughfare should only correspond to the number of passengers at any given time.

The buses unnecessary but already stay at endpoints are routed to areas needed, Vergel de Dios said.

"But these traffic projects could not succeed without the cooperation of bus operators and drivers," he stressed.

Manila property could cost more



UP THERE
Workers disassemble scaffolding along Roxas Boulevard in Manila in a high-risk, low-paying job.

By Tarra V. Quismundo

ON DOMO, Roxas Street, a thoroughfare that stretches through the cities of Makati and Manila, a square meter of land is valued differently once the demarcation line is crossed.

The land assessment values that determine the property tax paid by land owners annually in both cities are as different as the municipalities' land use classifications are.

Those who buy land on the Makati side would pay P5,000 per square meter, or 66 percent higher than in Manila, where a buyer would pay P3,020.

But that may soon change, and land buyers and land owners in Manila could end up paying more.

In the second to be unspoken, the Manila City Council has moved to change the current land assessment values for both commercial and residential lands.

In a proposed ordinance, which would amend the city's Revenue Code, councilors from the majority bloc proposed to double the assessment levels imposed on land within Manila.

Revenue-generating

"We just want to be at par with the other cities, and this would of course be generating revenues for the city," said major by Councilor Manuel Zarate.

He explained that while cities Metro Manila cities had increased their rates, Manila has long maintained its land values at 1994 levels. When approved, the new appraisal rates would be applied next year.

From an assessment level of 10 percent for residential areas and 30 percent for commercial property based on the 9-year-old City Assessor Code, the proposal seeks to increase an assessment level of 20 percent for residential lots, and 50 percent for commercial lots.

The assessment level is the rate the City Assessor's Office uses to compute tax dues of the city's land owners.

PNCC says SLEX toll rollback temporary

By Clarissa S. Santos

THE PUBLISHING National Construction Corp., operator of the fourth and fourth Lanes Expressways, yesterday said that the 20-centavo rollback ordered by the Tollway Regulatory Board would be implemented on Friday. However, it added, the rollback in the southern route might be temporary.

PNCC chair Rene Banzon said the toll for along the South or SLEX could soon go back up to 72-centavos per km.

He said the state-owned PNCC would not immediately implement the rollback of the SLEX toll fee as the machinery installed have to be calibrated anyw.

A refund mechanism is also being worked on. He said SLEX users who kept their receipts could ask for a refund or a discount on succeeding.

The TRB ordered the PNCC last Monday to rollback the toll fee along the SLEX by 20 centavos per km and to impose a 52-centavo per km uniform rate along the SLEX and the North Luzon Expressway at NLEX for cars and jeeps.

The 82-km SLEX stretches from Alabang to Calamba, Laguna, while the NLEX, covering Balintawak to Sta. Ines in Pampanga, spans 93 km.

The PNCC asked motorists to pay 71-centavos per km along the SLEX and 52-centavos per km along the NLEX starting July 5 from only 33 centavos per km. The 52-centavos per km rate is higher than the 47-centavos per km rate approved by the TRB earlier.

The new toll rate translates to a SLEX fee of P35 for cars and jeeps, P38 for light trucks and vans, and P95 for heavy trucks. For NLEX, the rates are P41 for cars and jeeps, P52 for light trucks, and P125 for heavy trucks.

Banzon said the PNCC would appeal the TRB's Monday decision or simply file another petition for an increase. He said the tollway operator was still crunching the numbers as to how much increase it would ask.

"The next rate adjustment is just six months. There are subsequent increases, toll rates along the SLEX might go back to 72-centavos per km. We are still reconciling figures," said Banzon.

He said the PNCC was mired in debt that could rise up to billions of pesos. Without a sufficient toll fee adjustments, it would not be able to upgrade the much dete-riorated SLEX.

Banzon added that the PNCC itself does not earn from the toll fee but uses the funds for upgrade and improvements.

The toll operator, according to Banzon, could no longer shoulder the increasing costs of maintaining the expressway, particularly the SLEX. The PNCC had entered into a joint venture with Lopez-owned Metro North Tollways Corp. to rehabilitate SLEX.

He said there were improvements urgently needed along the SLEX such as the P936-million repair of the six-lane viaduct, the P34-million repair to prevent flooding, the P4-billion extension of the expressway to Cavite, and the P480-million expansion of the highway.

The rates for both SLEX and NLEX are now 52 centavos per km for cars and jeeps from 33 centavos, P1.06 per km for light trucks and vans from 67.6 centavos, and P1.35 per km for heavy trucks from 95 centavos.

Transport Undersecretary Arturo Valdez said that motorists who kept their receipt can ask for a refund from the SLEX.

The transport official said that the TRB would have asked the PNCC to reduce the toll fee along SLEX to 47 centavos per km.

"But our body cognizance of PNCC's position that it was supposed to implement a 20-centavos increase in Jan. 16, 2003 but TRB stopped PNCC. Based on our computations, a 52-centavos increase is reasonable, given the development of the SLEX," said Valdez, who represents the transportation department in TRB.

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Transport group sees crisis in phaseout of buses

A TRANSPORT group has warned the Arroyo administration of a potential mess in the sector with the government's efforts to phase out older utility buses in Metro Manila and other urban centers by next year.

Alex Yague, president of the Alliance of Bus Associations of Southern Luzon (ABSL), warned that the phaseout of passenger buses and the frequent breakdowns of the light railway transit lines established to struggling thousands of transport beneficiaries will affect thousands of ordinary commuters.

Still reeling from the substantial fuel price increases, the pending petitions for fare increases (including taxi groups' application for at least a P10 flag down rate), and increases in the toll rates, the Arroyo administration now faces unrest in the transport sector over moves to phase out passenger buses in Metro Manila, Yague said in a press statement.

Pinkay Ong, the local convenor of the Alliance of Concerned Bus Operators-Bikazo Buses Plant Inc. (ACBO-BBP), stressed "that government must do more to resolve these issues, which is why we are calling on top government transport officials to resign to pave the way for better programs for the transport industry."

Transport groups have sought the suspension of "Executive Order 1, Undersecretary Arturo Valdez and Chair Dante Basilio of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, which they blame for the woes of the transport industry.

"The government move to phase out passenger buses plying Metro Manila will lead to a transport shortage and will only force hapless vehicle suppliers at the expense of the transport sector," the ACBO-BBP official said in a statement.

The alliance stressed that limiting the substitution and dropping of 15-year-old units to just six months will make re-fleeting of buses not only very expensive but also virtually impossible.

The alliance noted that if the government insists on implementing its order, some 5,000 buses plying Metro Manila will be immediately phased out since there are at least 15 years old.

"The result is major transport crisis, as estimated P300 million to P1.6 billion in operations will be needed to purchase new buses to replace those that will be phased out," the group stressed.

Ben Soancing, chair of the Transport Operators for Clean Air (Toca), the umbrella group of transport organizations which includes jeepney and taxi operators pushing for compliance of the Clean Air Act, said "the issue here is roadworthiness and not age."

He said the Clean Air Act and its implementing rules and regulations do not specify an age limit provision in determining the roadworthiness of motor vehicles.

Soancing said what the Clean Air Act provides is that the government develop and implement an inspection and maintenance program for the efficient and safe operation of motor vehicles. This the government has failed to do, he said.

Rail relocation to proceed

By Edson Cavero Tordoc Jr.

THOUGH funding is still a problem, the National Housing Authority is optimistic it could begin relocating informers affected by the construction of the Northrail Project before the year ends.

Target area

"We hope to relocate residents living on the first seven kilometers from Caloocan City to Meycauayan City within the year," NHA general manager Ed Hernandez told the Inquirer yesterday.

The target area has about 6,000 families, and 27,000 families remain on the old Philippine National Railways tracks, where the area said project will build.

The stalled relocation is being blamed for the delay in the construction of the first segment of the P400-million project that will connect about 20 km from Caloocan City to Malolos, Bulacan.

Still on hold

Three months ago, government officials held a groundbreaking ceremony and promised the project would begin on the third week of April.

But actual construction hasn't started.

Not enough

Hernandez said the NHA could come up with about P700 million for the relocation, but this is not enough.

Northrail president Jose Cortez Jr. earlier told the Inquirer the relocation would require about P1 billion. While part of the loan package has been allotted to the relocation of affected families, the bulk of the expenses would have to be shouldered by the NHA.

Apart from buying lots for the relocation site, Hernandez said the NHA would also provide livelihood and home materials loans to the affected families.

Time frame

The loan package, largely from the Canadian bank, would be forfeited if the construction does not begin this year, officials said.

The government, however, could ask for an extension, Cortez said.

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CHIEF Supt. Pedro Bulaong presents the suspects in the murder of UP nursing student in Manila.

GOOD CITIZEN SHOWS WAY

Police arrest 5 in UP stude's slay

By Lala B. Salaverria

A CONSCIENCE public transport driver lead police to the trail of five men suspected to be involved in the killing of University of the Philippines nursing student Jim Karlo Cabili during a robbery attempt along Taft Avenue, Manila, last month.

The suspects were alleged members of the Intriko Gang, also known as the Velez V gang, allegedly responsible for a series of Hi and jeepney robberies in Manila, including the robbery attempt on Cabili and his subsequent killing, said Western Police District director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong.

Traced to hideout

The five were traced to their alleged hideout in an apartelle along Bambang, Sta. Cruz, Manila, after an FX driver who was driving behind another FX vehicle where the victim was attacked followed the four suspects as they fled from the crime scene in Malate.

Sr. Insp. Joselito Sta. Teresa, chief of the District Police Intelligence Unit (DPIU) that arrested the suspects, said the driver later went to the police and told them where the suspects could be found.

Recovered

The suspects were arrested on Monday morning. Recovered from them were a hit knife and two cell phones.

Only four of the suspects were identified as among those who attacked Cabili, 20, a third year UP nursing student on his way home to Las Piñas when the suspects tried to take his wallet as the FX was travelling along Taft Avenue on June 24.

Cabili fought back, and seeing his chance, got out when the driver stopped the vehicle because of the commotion. The four suspects then chased the victim and stabbed him at the corner of Taft Avenue and Remedios Street.

The four were identified as Michael Llanera, 21; Herbert Malabay, 25; William Sedayan, 31, and Amador Aldana, 23. The driver of the FX where the attempted robbery took place had identified the four as the ones who had attacked Cabili, said Sta. Teresa.

Lookout

The fifth suspect, Jonathan Cigaral, 22, was not in the FX, but PO1 Jolly Allangan said Cigaral was arrested last the same because he was with the four suspects. Allangan added that Cigaral usually acted as lookout for the group and was the one who hid the evidence their group commonly found.

Bulaong said Llanera and Malabay had also pretended to be policemen by wearing blue polo shirts with the WPD logo when they robbed some of their victims.

Ban on blue shirts

"Because of this, I had to ban Manila policemen from wearing blue WPD T-shirts," he said during yesterday's press conference, where the suspects were presented to the media.

Llanera and Malabay yesterday admitted to stabbing Cabili.

"Hindi naman po namin sinasadya. Pero dinig namin ay," Llanera said, adding that they were forced to stab Cabili when the latter fought back.

Aldana also said he did not know about the stabbing because he was sitting in the front seat. Llanera and Malabay were seated at the back with Cabili.

Former boxing champ nabbed

By Tina Santos

THE JOBLESS? Some fame of former world boxing champion William Mgabler ended in jail yesterday when he was arrested with another man for allegedly robbing passengers of an FX taxi in Quezon City.

PO1 Arnold Rivera of the Stake Station of the Central Police District said Mgabler, 34, a stay-in at Innercent Lodge in Bambang Street, Winalis, was arrested with Alex Aquino, 34, of Silva Point Street, Cubao.

Investigation showed that Mgabler and Aquino pulled out knives inside a Pegaso 6-bound FX taxi and robbed passengers as the vehicle was at the corner of Ilang Avenue and Examiner Street at about 11:30 a.m.

The duo reportedly then fled on foot after taking some P40,000 in loot.

Victim Tadeus Vergara, 22, student of Sta. Niño Street, Barangay San Antonio, sought the help of the police, who managed to apprehend the suspects at the corner of Ilang Avenue and Rizal Street.

Mgabler, who won the World Boxing Federation welterweight crown in 1995, had worked as parking attendant at the Fairvent Plaza Complex in Pasay City.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 2004
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
A 14
SPORTS

WORLD POOL

Reyes, 3 more RP bets gain main draw

FORMER world champion Efren "Bata" Reyes quietly followed three compatriots who reached the main draws of the 2004 Taiwan World Pool Championship in impressive fashions yesterday at the World Trade Center in Taipei.

Lee Van Corteza and Dennis Orcollo topped their respective groups like Francisco "Django" Bustamante, who was the first to advance Sunday, while Warren Kiamco posted six straight wins before losing to former two-time champion Chao Fong-pang of Taiwan in a one-hour tiebreaking battle for No. 1 in Group 10.

Reyes, the 1999 champion in Cardiff, Wales, advanced with a 4-1 win over host in Group 3 behind Orcollo, who ended the bracket with a 6-1 mark after winning his last three matches.

The rookie Corteza was his last two games to finish with a 5-2 record in Group 4 and make it to the 64-man tournament proper starting today.

The jubilation in the 11-man SF camp was subdued, however, as Jose "Penang" Parico, the former SF pool king now based in California, bowed out within 2 1/4-shots Group 16 after losing two of his last three matches.

Five other Filipinos remain in contention either for the third and fourth qualifying berths or their respective groups as the tournament wrapped up its four-day elimination schedule at presstime.

Marlon Manalo was in the third slot in Group 1, Rodolfo Luat held third in Group 9 at 3-2, behind three Ukrainians and Ralf Souquet of Germany and Antonio Lining who was running first ahead at 3-2 in Group 5.

Antonio Gabica was among four players with 3-2 mark in Group 7, while Candy Addis was hoping for the last wild card in Group 12.

Raniel Estrilgo (No 128) SF entry never got going and was among the tailenders in Group 1 at 1-4.

Alex Pagulayan, a Penang-pusto representing Canada who was second here last year, also advanced as No. 2 in Group 6.

The top four players from 16 groups of eight men after the qualifying round advanced to the main draw. The lone-best player to earn to 11, striped finals, up to the last 16. It will be race to 11 in the quarterfinals and semifinals with the championship set to 17. Philra report from Marlen Barcia dino

KIAMCO fires up his cue. Only two-time world champ Chao beat him in the qualifying round.

Leila's Brazil top attraction in GP volley

By Nina Alanko, Contributor

BARROS The head server is back.

Talks to halt Cito-Peping clash on

By Marc Anthony Reyes

IN THE spirit of unity, top officials close to Philippine Olympic Committee president Cielito Chapeh and opposition association president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco are brokering talks to avert their head-on collision in the November polls.

The one-hour by-bowling duel and POC vice-president Steve Hontiveros yesterday as the two contenders for the top POC post try to come up with a unified ticket in the elections.

Hontiveros, the chef de mission of the SP team to the Athens Olympics, said there is a chance one of the two presidential hopefuls will give way to prevent a bitter division of the POC general assembly, which is made up of 36 national sports associations and 16 associate titles.

Cards stake lead vs rising Altas

WILL-REESTED Magsaysay stakes its lead against surging University of Perpetual Help today in the NCAA senior basketball tournament at the Rizal Coliseum.

Game-time is at 2 p.m. with the Cardinals seeking a fourth straight victory against a team enjoying a similar three-game winning streak after dropping its opening match to Jose Rizal.

The Heavy Bombers tackle the Philippine Christian U Dolphins in the other senior contest at 4 p.m. hoping to stop a three-game skid.

Perpetual Help, which finished with an inconsistent 8-6 performance last season, has been rallying on the gritty efforts of swingman Dominador Javier and Amerasian forward Hanjorel Jao.

"I really am thrilled our wins to my players. Their hearts deserve every victory," said Altas coach Bai Cytrician, whose team is coming off an exhilarating double-overtime win against San Beda last Monday.

Magsaysay, enjoying an eight-day rest, is again expected to count on reinforcers Christian Cuevarra and Francisco Mirelis.

"We're more prepared on them because they haven't lost yet. But they are beatable and we're going all out," said Cytrician.

FCU, which placed dead last in 2003, has a 2-2 card and hopes to move up behind the leadership of Robert Jaen.

In junior play the Maharlikas look for their first win against the Altas at 11:30 a.m., while the Light Steelers and Baby Dolphins meet in the 8 p.m. nightcap.

—Antonio M. Pigao

STANDINGS	W	L
Mapua	3	0
Letran	3	1
Perpetual	3	1
JRU	2	2
FCU	2	2
San Beda	1	3
JRU	1	3
St. Benilde	0	4

GAMES TODAY's Final Eliminations
11:30 a.m. —Perpetual vs JRU
1 p.m. —Mapua vs FCU
Team standings may change after today's games.

Bright prospects for Buen, Arevalo

Junior World golf under way

By Joey Arnaiz

SAN DIEGO—The road leading to a world championship may prove easy and short for Aurelio Buen and Adrin Arevalo.

Buen and Arevalo kick off their respective bids in the newly introduced girl's 9-years-and-under division of the Callaway Junior World championships Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila) with just three foreign clubs to beat at the pitch-and-putt Presidio Hills course.

Time is limited, however, for two Filipino girls who carry the best chances of earning a victory for the 34-player scoop from Philippines, which is also planning to have an Ernie Ardiente and Miguel Tabuena in the 9-10 division.

Unlike their youngest teammates, Arellar, Tabuena and the rest of the PSC backing for top honors in the six age-group categories for boys and girls have strong week-ahead edges.

Arellar, whose is Presidio Hills two years ago, is seeking a second Asian World title in the family circle, a senior student among the top three weighted favorites to contend for victory.

Big boy Hideto Inagawa, who had the 9-10 years title in his grip but removed in the final round last year, returns with sufficient marks to bag the shaken title this time in the 11-12-boy-ons at Lawrence Park.

"We have been a big team which hopefully can deliver a couple of winners. He told the kids just to try their best," said Luigi Tabuena, president of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines which assembled the team sponsored by Philippine Airlines, Smart Bd, Samsung, Manila Southwoods and Callaway.

Filipinos vying in Class A—Dahlia Asiatic, Justin Tandoganing, Jayme Agoje and Lovelyn Gonzales—have the daunting task of challenging the world's best teenage talents.

But Agoje is also a Junior World title in her final try she will have to beat Tseng Yu-ni, the Taiwanese who shocked Michelle Wie for the 13 Public Links title recently as well as a horde of other talents getting ready for stints and scholarships in the US.

Agoje couldn't write last year's list her Top 20 title job was enough to get her four scholarship offers. She didn't accept any of them but she should be getting more offers if she plays well again this week.

The 13-year-old Asiatic is playing the kind of game that might restore the country's low profile in the previous hope: 33-37 division king after the second breaking victory of Carlos Villamoran.

"The course is long but his solid ball striking should handle that. He's here for the first time, so this is just for experience," said Asiatic's coach. Tony Boy, a professional who had placed in several Junior World titles before.

The delegation announced was chosen by the Philippine Amateur Golf Association (PAGA) officials Tuesday and members of the PAGA groups Sunday after the opening ceremonies.

With Arellar in her division is Stella Tinoco, the first Filipina last year for tying for second in the 11-and-under division.

The Philippine entries:

Class A (Jenny Rose) Jayme Agoje, Jessa Tandoganing, Jessie Agoje, Lovelyn Gonzales, Ellen Rose Ann Arellar, Stella Tinoco, Dahlia Asiatic

Class B (Ruby Rose) Miguel Tabuena, Ellen Rose Ann Arellar, Stella Tinoco, Dahlia Asiatic, Jessie Agoje, Lovelyn Gonzales, Jessa Tandoganing

Class C (Jenny Rose) Ernie Ardiente, Hideto Inagawa, Justin Tandoganing, Jayme Agoje

BIG TV-PRIZE: Agoje (right) with rival Jayme Tandoganing, Jayme Agoje and Lovelyn Gonzales (center) and Thailand's Wie.

Corporate Cup top guns in big starts

LAST year's runner-up Philippine Daily Inquirer, top shooter Hugo Bonanza and dark horse Pro-Kinesis opened their title campaigns with rousing victories Monday in the Sportsmaster Corporate and Golden Cup 2 badminton tournament at Club 300 Badminton Center in Lubao, Quezon City.

The Inquirer shuttlers swept Meralco, 5-0, with outstanding wins in the ladies' and men's doubles and mixed doubles events in the corporate competition presented by Sportsmaster in cooperation with Bankap Sports.

PDI president Sandy Prieto-Javier couldn't contend up with Amanda Carpio to beat the Meralco duo of Flor Vivas and Cynthia Garcia, 15-2, 15-2, while Gem Padilla and Judy Lim thrashed Gee Adduhan and Agnes Abaeg, 15-0, 15-3, in ladies' doubles to set the tone for the win.

In men's doubles, Ananias Lazard and Dave Valdez subdued Bob Antonio and John Magpayo, 15-7, 15-8, and Alex Reyes and John Rey outlasted Jun Manzano and Ney Flores, 8-15, 15-6, 15-6.

Completing the big day for the Bharata Arsenia international 10-0 sweep was the duo of Nino Lim and Isabel Rosenbaum, who made short work of Jessy Cruz and Dee Nona, 15-1, 15-1, in mixed doubles.

The Inquirer netters whitewashed Philippine National Bank, 5-0, as Alfonso Ubaqueta-Samuel shooter Jethro Dionisio proved as formidable with a racket as he is with a gun.

Dionisio teamed up with Adrian Cruz to downed PNB's Jonathan Macam and Rainer Nieva, 15-4, 15-7.

Hugo Bonanza yielded a match but won just for tough for Shuttlegirl, 8-1.

Other Monday results: Corporate Cup 2: Pro-Kinesis 5, Metro Alpha 0; BPC 5, Unilab 0; Philippine Daily Inquirer 5, Meralco 0; Philippine National Bank 5, Alfonso Ubaqueta-Samuel 0.

Leila's Brazil . . .

From page A10

public in Friday's opening game at 5 p.m. Korea battles Poland at 7.

"This is a hard group," said assistant coach Paulo Barros Jr.

The Lilian D Barros, who openly wept at the rousing ovation the crowd gave her in her last stint here as part of her retirement the locker out, extinguishes hopes of coming back.

But at her age, it would be unlikely that she would do so as a member of the Brazilian national team, which Barros helped in win the 1994 and 1998 titled Fetaps.

This year, she hopes to play a big part in a squad that includes dud, like Erika Coimbra, Gleisquila Oliveira, Fernanda Venturini, Rilza Souza, Fabiana Oliveira, Paula Pequeno, Nanis Rodrigo, Valentina Moreno, Caroline Dame and Fabiana Claudino.

Talks . . .

From page A12

"We all want unity here and the last thing we want to happen is some more divisiveness in our ranks," said Hontiveros, a known supporter of Cojuangco.

Duavit earlier said he would try to offer Cojuangco a POC position "few hours not hours and day in day responsibilities."

The POC chief is now in Taiwan for a meeting with the Asian Boxing Confederation, which is reportedly offering him the ABC presidency.

Duavit might offer Cojuangco the position of POC chair, considering the other four prospective chairs—Badminton's Bing Pimentel, cycling's Ben Lim, Basketball and incumbent Robert Jaworski Jr.—are not interested.—with Jaworski also reportedly backing Cojuangco.

But other sources said it's Cojuangco who is trying to convince Duavit not to run and instead endorse the former Turbo congressman as the next POC head.

QUICKEST: Mankind's fastest driver Jody Cheesman won at track-record-clocking time in the fifth and ninth rounds of the Philippine National Touring Car Championship Sunday. Cheesman, driver of this Visay Cheesman, who is backed by Cotcot Narvaiza and Jun-Miguel Beltran, was unchallenged in the morning and afternoon races of the centerpiece M1 class where he finally grabbed the overall leadership. Cheesman sained the pole position early and posted the fastest time of 1:59.796 in lap 2 with a total time of 47:18.946.

Parica symphony for Bata Reyes

UNMAR, someone was absent from the meet-ups, and they were not doing anything.

By now Noon Sun should've alerted organizers on their failure to show even the shadow of Efren "Bata" Reyes. It missed after three rounds of the World Pool Championship in Japan.

Well, practically all the big names in world pool, including retired millionaires from the region, had been featured on the TV table.

After game gurus like Strickland, Bustamante, Archer, dominator the defending titlist, Petersen, Pagulayan have had their share of the spotlight. Sometimes fans were left to wonder if these Filipino superstars—have overpowering.

Where was the true master caroler symbol of 10 greatness in the game?

It was like watching a movie without the well-loved leading man.

***

There was no hint of him who won the world championship in 1999 to had a pool room out only in Manila, but in neighboring Asian capitals as well.

Did this have a thing out with organizers?

You see, despite the fine display by Taiwanese hero, there were missing points in the tournament where fans would have like to provide balance and eyes.

Or, to put a more frankly cute the battle being reflected on viewers by some shaky players who make playing pool appear like an ordeal.

Of those eyesores, we could single out that effort Monday over Tony Gaco, dubbed the fastest shotmaker in the world, by an underrated Japanese opponent who could've succeeded in driving some fans away from the TV screen with his tight, edgy style of play.

***

Yet, the piece should've been entitled Pleading for Bata Reyes.

However, there is what happened, happily of course, Monday evening as we examined the screen for a glimpse of The Magician.

And when we were set to give up and

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January-May investments up 692%

July 13, 2004 country	Unit	Cash Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	1.0000	1.0000	55.7270
Japan	Yen	107.00	1.0000	103.8
United Kingdom	Pound	1.100.36	1.9838	105.0
Switzerland	Franc	1.3220	0.7565	1.339
Sweden	Krona	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Norway	Krone	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Singapore	Dollar	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Australia	Dollar	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Taiwan	New T	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
South Korea	Won	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Brunei	Dollar	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Thailand	Baht	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
India	Rupee	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
New Zealand	Dollar	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Norway	Krone	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Denmark	Krone	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
South Africa	Rand	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Kenya	Shilling	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Canada	Dollar	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Spain	Peseta	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
Italy	Lira	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001
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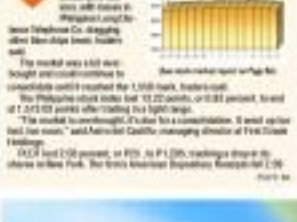

By Bunnel W. Dumlao

TOTAL investments approved by the Board of Investments and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority in the first five months of the year surged 692 percent to P137.2 billion from only P17 billion in the same period last year.

Of the amount, the BOI accounted for P113.6 billion while the Peza contributed P23.6 billion.

Trade Secretary Cesar S. Purisima said the increase was mainly due to the huge approved investments in power, infrastructure projects, which jumped 2,107 percent from year-ago level.

The energy projects approved during the period included the P96.5 billion natural gas power-generation project of GMR-Megaw Co., the P1.17 billion geothermal plant of PNOC Energy Development Corp. and the P3.04 billion bagasse power plant project of Talisay Bioenergy Inc. in Negros Occidental.

Purisima said the approved power-generation projects accounted for P109.94 billion, or the bulk of the total investments approved.

Of the investments committed from January to May, foreign equity accounted for P110.1 billion, or increase of 1,006 percent from P10.87 billion in the first five months of 2003.

Local investments made up P27.1 billion, higher by 104.8 percent than the P6.6 billion last year.

The number of approved projects in the first five months went up by 11.7 percent to 177 from 257 while jobs created went up 11.7 percent to 32,886 from 36,696.

Also, aggregate investments in May went up 11 percent to P5.09 billion from P2.78 billion over the same month last year.

For the month of May, Purisima said the top investment projects were in the mining and quarrying sector, accounting for 45 percent or P1.290 billion of the total.

The DTI chief added that information technology services registered P1.13 billion while machinery made up P486 million of the May investment figure.

Among the top dollar recipients approved in May were Philex Mining Corp.'s P1.2 billion copper mining project in Benguet, Oreotiqui Philippines Inc.'s P111.8 million coal cattle operations and Hacienda Luisita Inc. Corp.'s P177 million ammonia manufacturing project.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez said the May figures showed that despite the "political noise" caused by the national elections, the country continued to attract investments because of its solid footing.

"Investors still see the country as an attractive destination especially for the manufacturing and mining sectors," Hernandez said.

The official added that the government's more supporting higher inputs of investments after President Macapagal Arroyo launched her administration's agenda for the next six years.

Data from the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Board show that in the past five-four years, aggregate investments in the past four years have consistently declined from P107.66 billion in 2000 to P63.79 billion in 2003.

Total outlay was pegged at P103.76 billion in 2002 and P99.28 billion in 2001.

Foreign direct investments showed the same trend as it declined from a high of P86.27 billion in 2000 to P34.01 billion in 2003.

Local investments amounted to P127.51 billion in 2000, P125.31 in 2001, P113.14 billion in 2002 and P80.78 billion in 2003.

60 courts tasked to handle dirty-money cases

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE SUPREME Court has designated over 60 courts nationwide to specialize in money-laundering cases.

The move is aimed at hastening the country's removal from the list of countries deemed uncooperative in the international community's efforts to curb money laundering.

"There are several comments of course that were also designated as anti-money laundering courts because of their expertise on financial transactions," said Supreme Court Spokesman Jesus Dureza.

Dureza said the AMLC had requested the Supreme Court to designate those special courts to clear the Pasig-based watchdog, the Financial Action Task Force (AMF), that the government was serious in curbing money laundering activities here. Government officials were confident that the watchdog was convinced of the government's determination to address the problem and that it would finally remove the Philippines from its list next year, Agustin said.

"This designation of special courts is our initiative, and not something that was recommended by the AMF. It was received opposition from other countries because, I think, it is only here in the Philippines that such a court was created," Agustin told reporters.

To complement the designation of the anti-money laundering courts, Agustin said, the AMLC had also tapped the services of the Philippine Judiciary Academy to provide training to judges who would handle money-laundering cases. The training will begin in August, he added.

The official said the AMLC had started the training program for prosecutors and law enforcement investigators on the nature of money laundering activities.

Money laundering is the act of making dirty money appear to have come from legal sources by placing it in banks and other financial institutions.

Due to the perceived absence of measures against money laundering, the Philippines was placed by the FATF on its list of uncooperative countries in the late 1990s. The international body had required the Philippines to undertake various reforms, such as the passage of the Anti-Money Laundering Act, as conditions to its removal from the list. Countries on the list have trade restrictions from other member countries of the IMF.

The law was passed in 2001 and the amendments required by the FATF were made in 2003.

The AMLC said the Philippines is already in the third and final stage of the reforms.

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Smart in talks with banks for loan worth $104M

By Clarissa S. Reyes

SMART Communications Inc. is negotiating with foreign banks for a $104-million borrowing to finance the expansion of its GSM network.

With the loan, the company aims to widen its coverage in remote areas in the country and improve its presence in the metropolis.

"I don't have the terms yet but we are working with a syndicate of foreign banks. It should be completed this month. I heard the interest rate is very low," according to Smart president Napoleon Nazareno.

Smart, head of public affairs Ideo Iñarra noted that the borrowing had nothing to do with the company's debt swap with Philippine Telephone Corp.

When to avail the company had already requested banks to make loan offers.

GSM is the digital mobile system used by the country's three wireless carriers.

NAPOLEON NAZARENO

Smart is the country's largest mobile phone company with more than 16 million subscribers as of the first half of the year.

The company's customer base remains as commodore 10 million-subscribers.

The company posted a net income of P5.2 billion in the first quarter, the same period last year. It was the country's most profitable company with P16.1 billion in net income.

Smart is expected to engage in 2005 investment plans.

The expansion plan, according to Iñarra, will start this year and will be completed next year.

The company has requested Nortel Networks supplier Motorola for the roll-out of additional cellular sites in remote parts of the country including the Visayas and Mindanao.

Iñarra said the company will use the proceeds of the borrowing would be enough to cover the company's dollar $-earning needs for the rest of the year.

To meet the requirements of a growing subscriber base, Nazareno said Smart was prepared to spend P15 billion for capital expenditures this year to strengthen cell-site systems support and widen its network coverage.

In the first quarter, Smart spent P5.3 billion for capital expenditures, second only to Nazareno.

Despite its huge capital outlay, Smart has been able to manage its debt level. As of the first quarter, its company's outstanding debt stood at only $342 million. Between April and December, about $90 million in obligations are falling due.

The company's long-term debt, however, went up by about $200 million after it completed early this month the buyout of 69.6 percent of PilTel's outstanding obligation worth P20.3 billion.

Iñarra said the company would likely use internally generated funds to pay off some of its maturing debt.

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MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Honda sees bigger market share with new hatchback model

By Ramon/W. Domingo

HONDA Cars Philippines Inc. yesterday launched a new 1.3-liter hatchback car model, of which the company aims at selling 2,500 units for the remainder of the year.

HCPI president and general manager Hidenori Takano said the new car, dubbed Honda Jazz, was meant to create a niche in the local market especially among the big-sized.

"This is a new kind of hatchback car class. I believe, has never been seen in the Philippines," Takano said.

He said HCPI was importing completely-built Honda Jazz from Thailand.

Novelty

"When Honda first introduced the Civic hatchback model in the local market in 1991, we were overwhelmed with the Filipino's warm reception to its design and novelty values," Takano said.

"To this date, there is still a market for this type of vehicle."

He said the Jazz was competing against models like the Toyota Echo or Vios, Mitsubishi Colt and Nissan March.

Takano said that Honda's decision to launch, HCPI aims to expand or beefing up its current model line-up, strategically strengthen its market presence in the light of severe competition; perking up the weakening automotive industry and do its share to contributing in the local economy.

Asset Cueva, deputy head of HCPI's marketing division, said the company remains optimistic with the new car in the wake of a surge in passenger car sales due to better prices under the new excise tax scheme for vehicles.

Affordable

First introduced in Japan as the Honda Fit, the new model has won awards such as the "Japan Car of the Year In 2001-2002" and "Best Selling Car in 2002" in Japan, as well as "Car of the Year" from the United Kingdom's Auto Express Magazine.

The Jazz/Fit model are currently being sold in at least 50 countries including those in Europe and North America and in Australia and Thailand.

According to HCPI, Honda has sold 600,000 units of the hatchback car all over the world.

Data said the Honda Jazz was available at introductory prices of between P500,000 for the 'N' version with manual transmission and P600,000 for the "V" variant with continuous variable transmission and anti-lock braking system.

The Honda Jazz comes in five colors: Taffeta White, Rallye Red, Satin Silver Metallic, Vivid Blue and Silverstone Metallic.

Sy emerges as 'cool' king

HENRY Sy Sr., the tycoon to bear in Tagaytay, has forged a Baguio deal to station his position in the country's top upland holiday destination.

Yesterday, the mall magnate disclosed that his SM Investment Corp. had signed a joint venture agreement with the Government Service Insurance System to develop a 2.34-hectare GSIS property adjacent to Sy's SM Baguio mall.

SMIC GSIS would finalize the land and SMIC the financing and development, by plans to build a residential condo and a hotel complex to complement SM's highly successful mall.

After the '80s fire that gutted Diplo Hotel and '90s earthquake that devastated the Hyatt Terrace, Baguio has been left with no top-tier hotel except for the stern Club John Hay Manor and the members-only Baguio Country Club.

Like the newly renovated Taal Vista Hotel, Sy also plans to build a similar class, mid-rate hotel-cum-condominium on the Tower City's Session Road. But the planned hotel may have to wait until after Baguio at nearby suburbs build a 24/7 international airport, according to the grapevine.

The runway of the current Baguio airport is too short, and operates only for a few hours, usually in the morning, because the mountaintop facility is daily shrouded in thick fog.

Sy also controls the members-only Baguio Country Club, which has emerged as the top golf and weekend destination south of Metro Manila—reachable in less than an hour's drive—for those who dislike trip to Calatagan and Punta Fuego too long.

Sy also owns a string of prime coney and hundreds of hectares beachfront and adjoining hilly property in Caylar between the rolling Puerto Azul and the rolling Punta Fuego resorts, but that is another property play waiting to happen.

Clark's angel

THE FEMALE teammate of the "high" Clark Development Corp. official—roommate became the very much married CDC official allegedly brought the girl along and shared the hotel room during an official trip to Europe—is one of the assistant-to-an employee of CDC, according to The Voice, a weekly Pampanga paper.

The Voice identified the CDC travel companion as Yoshi R., whom the weekly owns went so far as to call a "mistress" for allegedly being housed in one of the CDC staff houses outside working hours from the CDC corporate officer.

A recipient of the Philippine Press Institute-hosted Mabuhay Foundation continually gives awards for best in investigative reporting and best in newspaper design, The Voice even published a related story about the alleged CDC affair, but ever talked to Corbitos or anywhere somewhat about the worrying multibillion-peso Trust Fund deficiency of the perpetual pioneer.

We even said we did, although we tried and called up Corbitos' no-office office.

All the financial data and conclusion in that offending column came from the official 2003 audit report, and here are the pertinent excerpt:

"The Company (CDC) received the balance of SEL (actuarial reserve liabilities) ... to reduce the ARL and INL (insurance reserve liabilities) ... by P4 billion and P206.9 million ... and did not recognize the accumulated increase in ARL amounting to P4.2 billion..."

"Had the prior period adjustments not been taken up and the accumulated increase in ARL and INL balance as of Dec. 31, 2003 would have increased by P13.2 billion and P266.6 million, respectively."

"Moreover, capital deficiency would have increased by P14.7 billion...

"In our opinion, ... the parent company financial statements ... do not present fairly, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles in the Philippines and the GIC's Pre-Need Uniform Chart of Accounts, the financial position of the College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. as of Dec. 31, 2003, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended," the audit report concluded.

Heard through the grapevine

MILGEA publisher Jake Maganiel, chair of the industry's Philippine Press Council, has issued Senorita Publisher for a hearing scheduled today to answer the complaint filed by Presidential adviser Roberto S. Benedicto over a spate of "fiction writing" stories from Forester Publishers and/or his comedian surrogate(s) writing in another column.

Remulo was forced to release the tome to the industry association after he failed in his offer to pay for advertising space just as his letter to the editor could be printed on it unscored.

Forester Publisher apparently prevailed again as his own paper screams on pink (the Remulo epithet) and blows out the P750,000-plus worth of ad revenue.

Remulo is being supported in this fight by former Cocktail Beth Cosmos Jun Cunia, who had been falsely accused also in the outrageous column of tipping in favor of Cuina and his wife the late Christmas tuffo of the Tower Club.

(Email: sobrito_p@pldtdsl.com or sobrito_p@hotmail.com)

Cocktails

Victor C. Aquatico

a related story about the alleged impending departure of CDC president Emmanuel Angeles, who came with a chorus of friends whom it referred to as "departed" "unidentified assistant."

Shooting the messenger

THE SELECT/USED College in Ermita, Pilot has protested the "extremely irresponsible" July 7 Cocktails column, particularly that portion where it said the CAP auditor "accused CAP ... of a P14.7 billion accounting legerdemain to mask its real 2003 (red) loss."

"It (whole industry, a Filipino innovation only recently recognized as a public interest of capital build-up, has been damaged here," wrote CAP Vice Vice president Lourdes de Guzman.

"We feel maligned ... considering the stakes [pesos and assets] the column has caused among our place holders ... besides putting CAP's image in a bad light ... and the names of our chairman, all men of known integrity and honor."

CAP even attached a certification from CAP national auditor Jovenir Guevara Constantino to show that he never said what was attributed to him in the column.

Constantino said two did, although we tried and called up Constantino's office.

All the financial data and conclusion in that offending column came from the official 2003 audit report, and here are the pertinent excerpt:

"The Company (CAP) received the balance of SEL (actuarial reserve liabilities) ... to reduce the ARL and INL (insurance reserve liabilities) ... by P4 billion and P206.9 million ... and did not recognize the accumulated increase in ARL amounting to P4.2 billion..."

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"Moreover, capital deficiency would have increased by P14.7 billion...

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Tagud eyed as Nenaco CEO

By Clarissa S. Batino

TAGUD

THE DARE Lacqua-backed tycoon parent investor of Baguio hotel-cabinet Co. a note being considered as the next president of the state-owned shipping line.

"I am one of those that they asked. I know they are talking to others. They told me to," Rodrigo Tagud Jr. said.

A source said to an interview that Nenaco's parent firm Metro Pacific Corp. included Tagud in the short list of candidates to replace Nenaco's president and CEO Gonzalo Carballo.

"Tagud is being considered. MPC will make the announcement as soon as the contract is signed," said a source.

Tagud was reportedly sacked as corporate secretary of Nenaco after sensitive questioned his credentials.

Tagud, a former director of Philippine Estates Authority, is the subsidy Money to be dinged energizing of the $11 million Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard.

Aurora Pacific is shopping for a new president who would hopefully quell Nenaco's out of its financial troubles. The opposition of a president will set to narrow Nenaco's widespread reorganization.

The shopping lists is saddled with a P2.5 billion debt burden.

SM to develop Baguio condo

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SM Development Corp., the real estate arm of retail giant SM group, has entered into a joint venture agreement with the Government Service Insurance System to put up a residential condominium in Baguio City.

Under the agreement, GSIS will contribute the property while SMDC will shoulder the financing and development cost. SMDC said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Informed sources said SMDC would invest roughly P1 billion to complete the project adjacent SM Baguio.

SMDC told the PSE that it has secured the "rights and obligations" of three company Interim Mutual Development Corp. over a 12,958-square-meter property occupied by GSIS in Baguio.

IDC earlier proposed to jointly develop the property located along busy Session Road in Baguio City with GSIS.

SMDC said it would take over the project and would develop 10,460 square meters of the total 12,958-square-meter lot into a residential condominium.

The project would be similar to SMDC's Chateau Upon condo-hotel development along Roxas in Pasay City.

Chateau Upon is an eight-tower six-story residential condominium catering to the middle income market.

Other projects lined up by SMDC include a residential condominium in Makati and a six-level upscale project of a 100-former property in Muntinlupa City.

SMDC also plans to develop a residential condominium called Makati Studay on a 2,179 square-meter lot at Gen. Luna corner Paraday Streets along Gil Puyat Avenue.

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RP may pay IMF loans ahead of time

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE IMPROVED financial ng Philippines may decide to prepay the country's long-term obligations to the International Monetary Fund should the volume of foreign investments increase and if exports continue to rise robust.

According to a ranking BSP official, the central bank may consider paying IMF loans earlier than scheduled because it will be a cost-efficient move.

However, the official said that the BSP would take into consideration the stability of its foreign investors in deciding whether to make the payments ahead of time.

According to the IMF website, the Philippines is scheduled to make its last loan payment to the IMF in 2014. IMF data showed that, as of yesterday, the country's total obligations to the IMF stood at $1.000 billion. The loans have varying maturities, the earliest is the $812,345,800 loan that will mature on July 22.

The BSP official said it is not unlikely for the Philippines to make advance payments to the IMF because of the strong showing of the country's major reliefs, if measured, would strengthen the country's dollar reserves.

The country's gross international reserves stood at $16.2165 billion as of June this year.

"If we continue to post high surpluses, why not make prepayments?," said the BSP official.

Exports for this year is expected to grow by 16 percent. The official said the 10-percent growth in at landable, notwithstanding the performance of the export sector in May.

During the month, exports reached $1.210 billion, or higher than the $1.020 billion recorded in May 2003. The May 2004 exports were also the highest in 16 months.

The BSP official likewise said the post election environment is expected to encourage businessmen to finally step from the sidelines and pour in much needed foreign investments.

High economic oil forces in economic help increase the country's dollar reserves, the official explained.

Once the government succeeds in implementing the programs to address concerns like the budget deficit, completion of the power sector and infrastructure, then investments are expected to surely come in, said the official.

The Philippines is currently under the IMF's post program monitoring (PPM). This PPM is an IMF surveillance program aimed at helping countries improve their fiscal performance through evaluation and recommendation of various measures.

Philcomsat, POTC ordered to hold meet

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has ordered communications firm Philcomsat Holdings Corp. (PHC) and affiliate units to hold their annual stockholders' meeting by the end of next month.

In an order dated July 8, SEC said Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC) should conduct its annual meeting not later than Aug. 5, and Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (PHILCOMSAT) not or before Aug. 12.

PHC should roll its own meeting not later than Aug. 31.

The government owns 40 percent of POTC, POTC owns 100 percent of Philcomsat. Philcomsat controls 85 percent of PHC.

SEC officials said that to resolve the issue as to who are qualified to represent and vote in the meetings, they have required the POTC and Philcomsat to form a committee on elections to gather records and identify legitimate stockholders of the firms.

The Presidential Commission on Good Government earlier said that POTC and Philcomsat have not held stockholders meetings for more than three years, while incumbent directors are sitting in a hold-over capacity.

In a January letter to the SEC, Philcomsat directors Philip Ibardolaza and Enrique Zobel explained that members of the board were unable to call a meeting due to the attempt of one group to control PHC "without legal basis."

YOUTH ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

Members of the Bayer Youth Environment Program take to a nature's pursuit from a exploration in Sierra by Bayer Philippines, with the United Nations Environmental Program, recently launched the search for the 2004 Bayer Young Environmental Envoys. The program aims to educate the youth on the global effort to protect the environment. Deadline for submission of entries is July 31.

10-year T-bond rate up to 12.75%

THE COST of the government's 10-year borrowing rose to 12.75 percent during yesterday's auction, which was marked by the market's strong appetite for long-term instruments.

The rate for the 10-year Treasury bond was 37.5 basis points higher than the previous, but the Bureau of Treasury said the figure was at a level reasonable enough for the government to achieve its objectives in considering the high volume of bids.

Bonds for the 10-year Treasury bond stood at P6.481 billion compared with the government's offering of only P4.5 billion. The treasury's auction committee accepted bonds worth P4.5 billion worth of bids, raising in full its scheduled borrowing.

According to National Treasurer Gloria Figueroa, the result of yesterday's auction proved that banks have regained their interest in long-term government debt papers after they shelved the securities as better investment option.

She added that the market, compared mostly of banks and insurance firms, is very liquid.

Traded auctions last month were marked by either partial or full rejection of bids because of low market appetite and high returns being sought by the market. Lackluster results of the auctions forced the government to raise the month three- and five-year retail treasury bonds (RTBs) as an alternative to the regular T-bonds.

Figueroa said that as of yesterday morning, the treasury had already accepted P30 billion worth of bids both for the three- and five-year RTBs, surpassing the P5 billion minimum the government agency hoped to raise.

RTBs, which pay regular bonds, can be bought even at a value as low as P5,000. The investment comes in retail denominations.

Next week, Figueroa is expecting the market to show the same strong appetite for government securities. She said the rates are not expected to spell costly increase.

Michelle V. Rivera

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DISCLOSURES

EXPORT and Industry Bank Inc. will host its annual stockholders' meeting on Sep. 10, 9 a.m. at the Lower Lobby of Export and Industry Bank Bldg., Ayala Ave. Record date is on Aug. 10. The bank also disclosed that one of its directors, Oswald Inc., bought 1 million shares of the bank last July 8.

* * *

CEMEX Executive Underwriting will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on July 27, 3 p.m. at the University Board Room, San Miguel, Manila. Only stockholders of record as of July 2 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PRYCE Corp. filed a Petition for Corporate Rehabilitation before the Makati Regional Trial Court.

* * *

THE BOARD of **SM Development Corp.** confirmed and ratified the Joint Venture Agreement between the company and Government Service Insurance System on the residential development of the 19,885 square meter property in Session Road, Baguio City.

* * *

ELECTED officers of **Amelie (Philippines) Hotel Corp.** during its regular board meeting were: Reuben Lichauco, chief executive officer; Norma Revora, chief operating officer; Elena Ong, chief financial officer; Arthur Pomaroon, chief information officer; Nini Sumulo, alternate information officer and Nelly Peñarete, compliance officer. The company will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Aug. 18, 4 p.m. at the Heritage Room of the Manila Peninsula Hotel. Record date is on July 16. *Compiled by Marissa D. Salazar, PDS Research*

PLDT drags stocks lower

Francisco El
percent on Monday.

"It's a healthy correction for PLDT," Ian Castillo said.

PLDT led its highest level in nearly five years early this month on expectations of a strong quarterly profit due to robust demand for mobile phones.

PLDT is due to report its quarterly results on Aug. 3.

Market turnover climbed to P671.03 million from P596.76 million on Monday, with more than 54 percent of the transactions comprising cross sales. Losers outpaced gainers, 37 to 20, with 43 remaining unchanged.

Traders said there were few incentives for aggressive positioning for now, with a lack of encouraging economic news.

Market players are likely to wait for confirmation of good second-quarter earnings before making more placements.

Report big of quarterly results is likely to start late this month until mid-August. Reuters

WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 2004
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
LIFESTYLE

Let the games begin!

UAAP 67: Fast facts and figures

By Lorenz Z. Mungcal
Cover Boy

POINTS, rebounds and assists are all important in the basketball-crazy UAAP, but here are some cool numbers that go beyond just what's on a stat sheet.

85 Number of UAAP wins De La Salle University coach Franz Pumaren has over younger brother Chesto, rookie coach of University of the East this season.

50 Years since National University won its only men's basketball crown, the longest title drought in the UAAP.

24 Years since Adamson University last won its only title, the league's second longest drought.

19 UAAP men's seniors basketball championships won by UE, the most in UAAP history.

18 UAAP men's seniors basketball championships won by NU, the second most in the league.

15 Consecutive wins La Salle has over Adamson, the longest current streak held by one team over another.

11 Years since Adamson last had a winning season, the longest such drought in the UAAP.

10 Consecutive years La Salle has made it to the Final Four; the Archers are the only team not to have missed the Final Four since the format was introduced in 1994.

8 Former Sta. Rita RedCobra recruited UAAP rookies Ederrick Antonio, Yuri Farinaccio, Magnum Membrere and LA Tenorio; UP-Jay Aglayan; Toti Reynoso and Jed Persano; La Salle-Jil Castro.

7 Former Ateneo Blue Eagles on the Purefoods squad: Bong Quinahan, Paolo Bugia, Marky Escalona, Larry Fonacier, Wynn Solomon, Biggie del Rosario and Jolbeen Bolano.

6 Sons of former PBA players on UAAP rosters: Adamson's Marc Agustin, son of Alex Agustin; Ateneo's Jayvee Aguilar, son of Peter Aguilar; La Salle's Jean-Jan Cabahug, son of Sonny Cabahug; FEU's Jonathan Ballesteros, son of Elvis Ballesteros; Paolo Hubalde, son of Freddie Hubalde; and UST's Dustin Polotan Jr., son of Sonny Polotan.

2 UAAP players who have brothers currently in the PBA: Adamson's Rizal Bugarin, brother of Coca Cola's Reynel Bugarin; and UST's Jaro Cuan, brother of Sta. Lucia's Mac Cuan, a former Green Archer.

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MARVIN Cruz PAOLO Hubalde CHRISTIAN Lucenzo ARWING Santos LARRY Fonacier MAC Cardoza KARL Bono REY Mendoza

23 addicts sighted!

JEFF Chan, Arwing Santos, Mark Isip and RJ Rizada of FEU Tamaraw.

By Deane G. Martin
Sports correspondent
Photos by Rudy Esparas

YES, YOU read it right.

Twenty-three players wearing identical headbands and armbands who ran action during the first two playdates of the Universities Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) are not. Armed soldiers. And they are proud of it.

"I just feel very blessed and thankful to be a part of Team Addict," says University of Santo Tomas veteran forward Christian Lucenzo.

Well of course, the Team Addict being referred to by Lucenzo here is the special grouped UAAP athletes who were chosen by Addict Mobile for their dedication and passion in basketball.

"These players embody what Addict Mobile is all about. They have the passion and genuine love for the game," said Louie Ang, project manager for Addict Mobile during the recent Team Addict Mobile presscon held at the Bistro Bar in Greenhills 2.

Aside from Lucenzo, the other 22 members of Team Addict Mobile are from UAAP Champion ADU Tamaraws—Arwind Santos, Gerard Mirondo, Mark Isip, Jeff Chan and R.J. Rizada; from the Ateneo Blue Eagles—Larry Fonacier, Lab Tenorio, Paolo Bugia, Magnum Membrere and Jett Isip; from the De La Salle Green Archers—Mac Cardoza, Joseph Yeo, J.R. Cortes, T.J. Tang and Jerwin Gaco; from University of the East Warrior Paolo Hubalde; the Adamson Falcons' Rey Bono and Leo Gamalinda; Tiger Jamil Vercara, University of the Philippines Maroons' Jim Alcuaz and Marvin Cruz; and National University Bulldog Rey Mendoza.

Passion and excellence

"The things we considered in choosing members of Team Addict Mobile were the players' excellent skills and abilities, their dedication and their passion for the sport," explained product assistant Nino Lorenzo.

"Addict mobile is all about being passionate in doing things and we want to show players that outside of them enlisted this passion which makes them the top gunners and crowd favorites," she added.

Coincidentally, the number of players that make up Team Addict Mobile, 23, has always been synonymous to excellence in basketball thanks to a certain retired National Basketball Association superstar.

"The number 23 personally has no significance. We simply chose the most excellent and most valuable players in each team to have only the best playing for Team Addict Mobile," said Lorenzo.

That should make this one group of athletes any basketball player would love to be a part of.

E-mail the author at dmartin@philstar.com

The mane event

YOU'D never guess from perusing in my (quite extensive) beauty product collection that the one body part I'm most vain about is my hair.

On second thought, maybe vain is not really accurate. There are days when I run a comb through my hair just once in the morning, have the house, and forget about my mane for the rest of the day.

But what I am most particular about is proper care and maintenance. My daily hair care ritual is the same every—pun intended.

While my skincare philosophy requires me to stick to those that truly work and my new stuff only occasionally, my hair can take all the constant experimentation.

My choice of products depends on how I want my hair to look, feel, behave and smell. The whole exercise involves only hair care products, no chemical treatments, and is actually a good idea to regulate one of the same product (or cross hair-dishing) build-up.

So try switching ones in a while. Here are my fave shampoo-conditioner combos:

Shiseido Moisturizing Shampoo and Total Care Conditioner: When I want my hair to behave, I turn to good old Shiseido. Both are very rich but don't weigh hair down. The combo gives an instant moisture boost, but you have to use it for a couple of weeks if you want the condition of your hair to really improve.

Clio Shine Smooth Oil Shampoo and Conditioner: On days when I want to let my hair down and flip about like a commercial model's (okay, there really is no flipping going on), I turn to Clio Shine.

Although there are many versions, I stick to this one because I like my hair smooth and shiny for straight-but-not-stuffy-looking hair, try them too.

Sunsilk Tropical Coconut Shampoo and Conditioner: When I want to get some mojo like "Yes, your hair smells terrific" with a beach babe twist, I look at the scent of Sunsilk's Tropical Coconut combo.

It was love at first sniff. The product, or at least the scent, was like the beach had been bottled. The soft, bouncy hair was a bonus!

The Body Shop Hair Spa Line. When I'm in the mood for a salon treatment but don't have the time (and money), I go for cheaper home alternatives like this brand new line from everyone's trusty beauty nook, the Body Shop.

At the end of a torturous day I massage a dollop of Brazil Nut Moisturizing Hair Mask, wrap my head in a shower cap, even if I look silly walking around the house, and leave the product on overnight (6-7 hours).

The next morning, I comb through my locks, rinse, then use Honeysuckle Hair Conditioner. After my bath, I spritz on some Jojoba Leave-on Detangler, comb my hair again. The result is lush hair locks and baby-soft.

Marie V. Full Shampoo and Conditioner. I've heard so much. Aside awards Amazon, Lil, Tweets, Studio Staple, Magnum Membrere and Jett Isip) from the De La Salle Green Archers—Mac Cardoza, Joseph Yeo, J.R. Cortes, T.J. Tang and Jerwin Gaco; from University of the East Warrior Paolo Hubalde; the Adamson Falcons' Rey Bono and Leo Gamalinda; Tiger Jamil Vercara, University of the Philippines Maroons' Jim Alcuaz and Marvin Cruz; and National University Bulldog Rey Mendoza.

E-mail the author at dmartin@philstar.com

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LIFESTYLE

BEAUTY. Smiles and brawn in the UAAP, courtesy of the women athletes.

The belles of the ball

Text and styling by Bianca Consunji, Sabrina (Zen) Roman and Cheryl Tu
INQ Correspondents
Photos by Jake Verzosa

IT'S that time of the year when school spirit reaches a fever pitch and school cheers are at their loudest. Yes, it's UAAP season once again.

Let's take you on from the (semi) oversupply of testosterone on the front court and turn the spotlight this year on the women of UAAP.

Quite a lot of people don't seem to know that UAAP not simply a basketball league for men. But who can blame them?

As far as TV airtimes and advertisers go, men's basketball is the center of the UAAP. Other UAAP sports, especially those played by females, have been generally ignored by sports fanatics and the media. Consequently, these girls play to almost empty stadiums, with only their family and friends to cheer them on.

Compared to the bruised coverage of men's basketball games, things are a bit unfair for female athletes. But then they've come planning, though.

Despite the public's seeming lack of atten-

JUMPING for joy in their chic, very feminine outfits. What can girls not jump for!

The belles of the ball

"A WOMAN athlete exudes stereotypes of being inept. I can take my potential to its greatest limits. —Hazel Tafalo, Lawn Tennis, ADMU. Pintaya lace dress, P1,200, YRTS

BEING an athlete gives me the confidence to face anyone or anything that comes my way.—Micah Valenzuela, Basketball, UP Diliman. Embroidered red dress, P1,195, Karlmarbel

MY sport is intellectually and physically challenging; you've got to be super limber.— Cindy Kampers, Fencing, UP Diliman. Blue tube dress, P1,399, Cassandra Ebarle

It's time we pay more attention to the tough, smart, hardworking girls of UAAP

Some images (C)

more, female athletes still work as hard as their male counterparts—sometimes, even harder—just for the love of the game.

For many girls, in fact, the challenge of being a female athlete is to prove that they can be just as good as, if not better than, the men.

Smashing stereotypes

Hazel Tafalo says, "The best thing about being a woman athlete is being able to shatter stereotypes that women are inept. It's being able to extend our potentials to their greatest limits."

Melissa Cruz agrees. "As a female athlete, you can develop yourself more and show others that it's not only men who can do well in sports," she says.

Another classic stereotype of the female athlete is the brash lesbian complete with cropped hair and bulging muscles. Sure, there are still butch-types lumping around the courts, but most female athletes aren't afraid to show their strength while remaining devoid of the lesbian.

"A female athlete like me can project that prim-and-proper image yet can also be as physically strong as a male athlete. If you think about it, a female athlete gets the best of both worlds," says Katrina Martinez.

Thelseth Mesiapo puts it in a simpler way: "The best thing about being a female athlete is enjoying the best meals and desserts guilt-free!"

We can see where the "guilt-free" spirit comes from. With the regular training they get, usually held at the crack of dawn, the girls have extremely fit bodies. Not bulky or lumpy, but lean and healthy.

THE BEST thing about being a woman athlete is having a sound mind and body.—Larissa Mae Chu, Table Tennis, ADMU. Dress, P1,150, Karlmarbel

"WE love being able to disprove the notion that females are incapable of playing just as well as men.—Melissa Cruz and Bridget Sodeska, Volleyball, UST

Gel Melissa pink halter dress, P1,195, Karlmarbel. Gel Bridget denim minidress, P1,499, YRTS

Then, for the shoot, it wasn't hard fitting them into soft, flowing, pretty dresses—clothes that suited them just as well as their "I mean business" jerseys.

It's time we paid more attention to the girls of UAAP. They're smart, they're tough, they know and love their respective games, they work hard and play hard.

To top it all, they look good in jerseys and dresses—something we can never say about guys.

E-mail lifestyle.mnl@philstar.com, a_t_r_o_m_a_n@yahoo.com and chloe_dimaapi@yahoo.com

BEING an athlete is having the courage to push through with what you want, people doesn't matter.—Thelseth Mesiapo, Swimming, DLSU. Green cami-neck dress, P1,495, Karlmarbel

ANY female can be an athlete as long as she puts her heart into the sport.—Katrina Martinez, Soccer, DLSU. Tube dress, P1,299

HUDDLE! No. These girls jog for hours and lift heavy weights. Seriously.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 2011 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE

No shortage of hope in UAAP cage wars

TIGHT GUARDING: La Salle's Chris Villanueva makes life harder for Ateneo's Magnum Membrere.

By Dennis G. Eros
Inquirer Lifestyle Sports editor

THERE certainly isn't going to be a shortage of thrillers in the coming UAAP wars.

The gangs of excellence is without doubt being dictated by defending champion De Lasalle University.

And the rest? Like dutiful subjects, they must follow the lead.

Not to take it away from the challengers, but the Taft Tamaraws should be a cinch to make it to the Final Four, especially since Arwind Santos has enough wind in him to blow away the opposition.

Once it's called the Final Four, I am forced to pick three teams to make the elite field.

And it should not come as a surprise if I go the safe route. La Salle, Ateneo and Adamson will make it after gruelling plays in the eliminations.

Look of manpower—stakes it side manpower—will have the chances of University of Santo Tomas, University of the Philippines, University of the East and National University to advance after the elims.

Of course, a strong lineup doesn't guarantee a title, but I'm not going to save away from my rankings.

True grit

Aside from having solid lineups, FEU and company possess the grit, which is crucial in their suppression the UAAPs unshackled waters. They relish challenges.

To tap the stats, 3022 and La Salle will get the nerves on best advantages in the series.

But the story doesn't end here.

Everybody knows UAAP basketball is notorious for its dramatic highs and lows.

The FEU Tamaraws should be a cinch to make it to the Final Four, especially since Arwind Santos has enough wind in him to blow away the opposition

No shortage of hope in UAAP cage wars

From page C2

FEU's ascent to Mt. Success isn't going to be free of troubles. The moves that Engineering 1.0 in the entire Arena's generation's finals appearance. It's still anybody's challenger.

Lasers to FEU coach Eric Altamirano, whose experience in putting the Tamaraws in the right frame of mind is paying high dividends.

"We're the underdogs simply because we're the defending champions. We hope to fulfill expectations," he says. The Tamaraws defeated in style by outlasting the UE Red Warriors, 80-64 in the opener last Saturday at the Big Dome.

FEU is ready from topping the rough Elite Lady Cup. While Altamirani isn't going to leave the luxury of shuffling the same men who won the Lady FEU still packs a terrific punch to floor its rivals.

Insurance for its shot arsenal, FEU can finish a game with a splash. Thanks to an effective inside game and suffocating defense, the Tams have become famous for forcing their foes to commit turnovers.

And La Salle?

DOUBLE TEAM Ateneo's Rodjie de Rosario (5) and Filemon Aguilar La Salle's Mac Cardona try double-team Ateneo's Rabeh Al-Hussaini during the first game of their UAAP men's basketball tournament at the Araneta Coliseum. AFP

FEU ace Arwind Santos takes command against UE.

The Archers need no introductions. They are deeper and quite hungry. There's a quiet intensity in La Salle, which Rosario optimizes for its seamless fans.

The stronghold of last year's Final four opponents despite a rookie-laden squad, a new and coach Franz Pumaren and his new job as a scientist. La Salle's mantra is "Bring back the glory days."

"We must play it the proper way. FEU's formidable, but Ateneo and Adamson look on my side like champion teams," says Pumaren.

Though sometimes comfortable like his counterparts, Pumaren has never strayed from his methodical style of coaching.

He isn't new to winning, of course. Pumaren steered the Archers to the Final four from 1998-2001 and loves to recall the up-and-down spirit in his charges.

"I would like to stress that we remain the youngest team in the field," he says.

To achieve glory, the Archers, says Pumaren, must always be in the right frame of mind.

La Salle's team manager Capistrano's calming influence should also be a boost to La Salle. Don't underestimate the power of a team.

"Anything can happen, and we're taking it one game at a time," says Pumaren.

The failure of playmaker Jonas Villanueva to clear eligibility leaves hosts FEU's chances. Dennis Miranda and Jed Cuebo will also miss the opening contest.

La Salle has Chido Villanueva, Ryuzo Tang and Tito Cardenas in the paint. Mac Cardona, if he'll only see his head all the time, should light up the scoring board.

Jewell Lucas's greatest contribution, Joseph Yeo's excellent skills remain underutilized and Al Cuala, last year's rookie of the year, has become more mature and confident.

No chickens

And Ateneo? Despite missing two-time MVP Nick Rivera and Rodney Gonzales, the Eagles aren't chickens. They proved it with a rousing come-from-behind 75-72 win over the Archers last Sunday.

Sandy Arespacochaga is forward Angelo Isidro, one of the biggest challenges of his young coaching career.

Al Manalo, thank God, had the decency to quit and keep the Eagles united so they can raise the Big One.

"We're upbeat," says Arespacochaga, a former assistant coach.

Larry Fonacier's academy is a joy to watch and the four rookies of the Eagles should be the stars in good time.

Rene Hagan, a big man with the perimeter shot, Clifford Ritao, JC Intal, John Ahmadshah, former junior MVP Ken Bartolozzi, Rodjie Ali Benedicto, Magnolio Mendoza and Jupelli Aguilar are primed to bring back the shadow a barrio FEU last year.

And Adamson? The Falcons are primed up for big cause, is defeated by declining LH Bo Lungi Trillo seven or five hours home to host La Salle, last Sunday's tests.

The cold against Trillo is 3-8 against the Archers since taking over four years ago.

The outlook, however, is certainly better for the Falcons, whose win led to make the Final Four last Season. Up to the season of last year, the Greek king who attended from and whose punishment was to roll a huge boulder to the top of the mountain only for the boulder to roll back down and Sisyphus to start all over again.

Adamson hasn't entered the Final four since 1999. The last time it hosted the trophy was in 1997.

There is the fifth year, Trillo certainly has learned his lessons well. To his credit, he has not only managed to keep the Falcons down, he has even made the team stronger.

Mark Bladis, homegrown has deadly fast forwards Boris, Rainil Tagaga, Jose Hans, Bo Tiongco, Hakim Castillanes, Adrian Concengco, Leo Gonzales and Patrick Calubaq will lead Adamson's attack.

Adamson is also going to run with the prayers of its president Fr. Gregg Santiago, an avid sports fan. Known for praising the Falcons during halftime huddles in the degree, Santiago should serve as a shining force for the Falcons to stand.

FEU will have to visit up at the Philippine version of the LA Lakers. But then, there are homegrowns Daniel Pinoso as well knowing just around the corner.

ART HAS A CLUB: Angelo and Gilo Rivera

STYLE STREAKERS: Mitos Fuentes and Tess Villareal

SASSY STRIKE: Sally Mina and Bernie Chan

INSPIRERS: Ina Limon

IT CHICKS: Kring Zabarte, Myrna Ortega and Tessie Angela Glaun

SINGE SUMMA: Wyel Hernandez

PREVIEW CHICKS: Pauline Sison in pants by Tomas Quisumbing

Mean Girls

WHEN I say mean—I mean lean and mean fashion fighting machines.

In Lorna Mednicoff's world of "Mean Girls," Caroline Phieler would have shrieked out, "That is so bitch!" Whereas in our animal world, where style and sensibility matter as much as survival, the most ferocious females ultimately win.

Regina George and her "army of skanks" nemesis in Tina Fey's book where they wreak dirty deeds about other girls. In contrast, Preview magazine has just launched its "Best Dressed List 2004"—the annual list of Pinoy style-setters who are making their mark.

What sets these fem fes? Taste, a lot of work out aim to be at the top of the food chain and some even make careers out of making sure that they are their faces on Preview's pages. But over and above the inflated egos and the vanity a "fashion magazine" usually promotes, Preview's list underscores personal style, flair and unique expression.

In short, style is never blind. Often fem just take refuge in cookie-cutter conventions of style (rich girl, bit beauty, rich bathwell). Preview's list covers a broad spectrum of women. Super stylist Anton Ignacio's sparky chic is as far from rocker Pinoy Pleyboyish's surrealist sensibility. Graphic designer Wendy Payan-Hartung's pristine glam is very different from model Christina Dantges' urban style.

Zizi Kapp

thought."—Richie Ureta-Lim, clothing designer and retailer

Continuous study

Personal style is forever evolving, and even style arbiter Tina Ocampo told Preview girl Claire Serdena-Samson in an interview, "It would change because of an influence (which) may come from a recent travel or any interesting person that I have just read about or have just met. My style will always be a continuous study."

At the cocktails to unveil the exhibit, style felt too fashionable to function filled the Greenbelt halls of the Preview hall. Hi-tech soft curtains mixed well with the rainbow mariuas. Spotted for those wearing Kanlaon Bazaar finds. Preview editor in chief Pauline Sison-Sison looked regal in an Tomas Quisumbing creation.

Taking inspiration from Inquirer Ann Hup's Arnel Ignacio's "hi-lo" fashion, panic came in designer wear meets hiking meets street culture. The result? A rainbow of pouch, gloves, flats and chaos.

So again, it's really about our sewing limits ("You can't wear tweed pants on Monday, Wednesday we all wear pink, or el"). It's all about personal rules. So skip the fashion fascists who try to dictate their wardrobe on you. Gasp! Don't tell them I told you.

Cheers to fashion freedom!

NEW ROSE: Joseph Ong with Preview's fashion editor Anne Bello

JUST SHOPS: Iphie Ilao, Jenni Epperson

MAMAMIA: Pilar Arnet Serrano and Nancy Fredell Gonzales

LILY: Lily Miller Tang and Wendy Payan-Hartung

IMAGE FLASH: Mari Zamudio Sun Block

HIGH THREE: Designers Kate Torralba, Yael Buencamino and Candy Reyes

SWEET CHARITY: Nancy Hagedorn and Cynthia Santo

ELITE MODE: Angelique Villareal, Miguel Rosales, Patricia Reyes and Kara Fernandez

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Non-stop fanspeak

Hobnob with like-minded UAAP freaks at these online message boards

By Arlene Paredes
2bU! Correspondent

IF TV, newspaper and radio updates aren't enough for you, and where friends are not as enthusiastic as you are in dissecting the latest UAAP (University Athletic Association of the Philippines) happenings, it's time for you to log on to the Internet and go to online message boards.

Here, you can talk smack (villain: total UAAP fans) to analyze the latest games, comment on UAAP developments, even break up on the remains of famous personalities on the most—including court side reporters.

In the Philippines, one of the most frequently visited online forums is Pinoyfanclubs.com (PFC). This also happens to be home to a lot of different threads or topics regarding the UAAP.

Even PinoyUnderCover.com, which used to host its own forum board, has now linked its UAAP discussion to PFC. In fact, in between UAAP seasons, the UAAP thread remains active in PFC.

Other sites that host forum boards with threads about UAAP include: Pinoyxp.com, Pcyap.com, Shoutta.net, Yehey.com, and of course, the official site of the UAAP, UAAPgames.com.

Even before the 67th season opened last June/July, some of these online message boards have been actively recruiting posts from UAAP fanatics in anticipation of another must-watch series of exciting games. We can expect these online message boards to chronicle blow-by-blow UAAP Season 67 as it unfolds.

The beauty of these online forums is in the fact that you can write, talk or post anything you want, as long as you don't insult anyone in the forum (or forum moderators might just decide to delete your post).

Following are snippets of forum posts from PinoyExchange.com:

Who will take home the first win? ADMU or OLSH?

I'm an Ateneo alum, but I have to concede that La Salle is way too sharp right now. Besides, Ateneo almost always loses its opening game (La Salle will win against Ateneo on July 11th). –Krisjanne

Rewards are made to be broken. –Hacked

On what the TV shows to watch

Star Studio: 22's coverage games last night? —Hacked-Out-Mo

PHILCENTRAL.COM'S UAAP page

man.

Wala ko lang kumpletuhin ng Studio 23 ang coverage ng half time. –cjbaron

I really hate their coverage of the half-time breaks. –hahamer saves

Recommendable reporters for Season 67

The girl from 07 has an irritating voice, so I hope she leaves her basketball-to-cooperate for it. –Herpederp

Gretchen Fullido (UP) and Beau Casiño (Ateneo) are both from "Dyo Bitz," Channel 23's now defunct dating game/reality based TV show. –Zai

Alinlipas ang negatibo ni Gretchen, but she's okay probably first-game jitters lang. –color_s Babestar

Ayaw ibalahan ni Christie magsalang sa balita ang introduction. My sentiment: Just get on the game. Sa kung sino man ang sa tim, kindly tighten the script. –scrappydoo

Status of support are most often the room in their sites. The following posts, for instance, appear in Pcyap.com:

I'll be there to throw my bangs out for the team. –softdrink666

Ang mga gustong tumulong sa pagpuno ng kanonda..dalan kayo, di ako mga hiya at wahaha tayo! –Jazzboy

God bless the UP Fighting Maroons! –steven.bloodied

Can't wait to finally see my two favorite players, formerly Robin and Marvin Cruz again! –vikavi

Saang sbo pagpuno ng bonnet? –vincent100.pcyap.com

Now if you feel you have anything to contribute to these forums, or you want to interact with as many UAAP players and supporters as you can, log on to the above-mentioned forums, enjoy the lively discussions and never be left behind again.

2bU! Survey: What does the UAAP mean to you?

Compiled by Maureen Tatoño and Zoe Castro

2bU! ASKS college coeds to spill their sentiments about the much-celebrated UAAP

It's a game for champions that builds endurance, teamwork and confidence. –Ashley Santos, FEU

The UAAP is responsible for making me extremely loyal to my school. The tournament allows me to show my heart out for my school's different teams. –Ralph Allgudo, ADMU Blue Babble Band

UAAP is a huge playground where all rivals are friends. A place where skill, love of the game, and loyalty are voted. –Joanne Rubiq, ZLSU Pep Squad

UAAP basketball is great as a reality available outlet for school passion, but it does take away from other UAAP sports. –Pinjo, ADMU

UAAP is definitely a season of well-celebrated talents—the biggest stage for any cheerdancer. –Kitoka Aranjuez, UP Pep Squad

The UAAP brings out the cheerleader in me! –Joanne Salcedo, ADMU

The UAAP brings out the hostility in me. –Leah, UP

The UAAP is one of the most prestigious collegiate basketball leagues in the Philippines. It boasts of top-notch collegiate basketball players. Each team takes the competition seriously, backed up by months of preparation by its players and coaches. This is why the UAAP has continued to dominate the collegiate basketball scene. –Jude Manlapaz, UP Fighting Maroons, Basketball

It's a yearly important event to the UAAP, we expect the players to show all they've got, proving why they are the pride of the school. –Mhel Labuguen, FEU

It's all for show. It gives the schools an actual official chance to outdo each other, and dare that they are better than the others. –Gina Reyes, UP

It's the season when the school spirit shines in its best. –Rina Valeda, ADMU

The ultimate representative of school spirit. –Doris Mays, UE

Simply put, it's a school it rules/popularity contest. –Tim R, UP

UAAP is a chance to show off your school pride, and a time when athletes becomes instant celebrities on campus. –Ek, ADMU

It's an avenue for the students to exhibit their talents/abilities. We're not just all about academics. The games also unite the whole school. –Michael Tee, UP Fighting Maroons, Basebball

UAAP is a way to show values such as pride, sportsmanship and passion. –Armand Sarmiento, ADMU Blue Eagles, Track

The UAAP means sportsmanship, unity and teamwork. –Elan Paredes, ADMU

For me, the UAAP is a time for unity, cooperation, school spirit and, most of all, sportsmanship. –Adrienne Lee, DLSU

The UAAP means school spirit and camaraderie—the coolest inaugural for college students. –Mitzi Olivares, UP

I think people should appreciate the UAAP in a whole different light. It isn't just basketball. There are a lot of other sports that have to be given importance, too. The UAAP is a chance for athletes to get together and bring competition and sportsmanship and excellence to a whole different level. –Amanda Gomez, DSU

The UAAP means school pride, a sign of school spirit, a place where teams bank it out to be able to have the bragging rights to say they are the best, a way of unity for the students of different universities. A venue to represent your university to make your school proud. It's a place to relax after a long week of heavy academics and simply have a good time. –Anne Ingalmake, UE/UAAP fan